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**LENINISM
AND
TODAY'S
PROBLEMS
OF THE
TRANSITION
TO
SOCIALISM**



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**LENINISM
AND TODAY'S PROBLEMS
OF THE TRANSITION
TO SOCIALISM**

A Textbook



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ЛЕНИНИЗМ
И СОВРЕМЕННЫЕ ПРОБЛЕМЫ
ПЕРЕХОДА К СОЦИАЛИЗМУ

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Chapter I

APROPOS OF THE POSING OF THE PROBLEM

The birth of a new social system—can there be anything more magnificent in the affairs of mankind? Social orders built up over centuries are smashed by the blows of the revolutionary hammer institutions and traditions hated by the people disappear and the whole face of society is transformed and renewed The road to raising the productive forces is opened and man's genius begins a new battle with nature that promises ever greater success

How does the birth of a new system come about? What path through the labyrinth of social processes leads to it?

These problems agitated the best brains of mankind in the past and continue to do so

Our generation is the witness and creator of an exceptionally bright period of history replete with great events Stupendous revolutionary transformations in public affairs and in science and engineering have affected social development on all continents The last exploiting system capitalism is going to its inevitable doom Socialism which has been transformed from a splendid dream into a tangible reality has become a force with a more and more decisive impact on the whole course of world development

The beginning of the new age in world history the epoch of the transition from capitalism to socialism and communism was the triumph of the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia The working people of the Land of Soviets supported by the proletariat of the whole world built the first socialist state in history As a result of the defeat of fascism during World War II in which the Soviet Union played the main decisive role and of the development of the working-class and national liberation movements the working people have made immense advances A world system of socialist countries has arisen that is growing stronger every year and restricting capitalism in all fields of the affairs of modern society At the same time capitalism is being undermined and

eroded by other powerful currents of the world revolutionary process such as the growing working-class movement in developed capitalist countries and the national liberation movement

A stubborn struggle is developing on the international arena. At its centre are the issues of war and peace, detente and disarmament, on whose solution the future of mankind depends. Imperialism has been forced to retreat, but it is continuing at the same time to step up the arms race to interfere in the affairs of other nations, to foment international conflicts and to exacerbate the situation in the world in every way. It places its main stake on military power in all the various ways it is displayed—from threats and militarist demonstrations to direct aggressive actions.

History shows that the main force in the fight for peace and the security of nations and against imperialism and hegemony that is capable of providing a solution of the vital problems facing mankind is socialism. And that is natural because the ideas of scientific socialism are penetrating every corner of the world. The superiority of the new socialist society in developing the economy, science and culture, in raising the material prosperity of the masses and in developing all the capabilities and talents of the human personality is now appearing obvious to increasing millions of ordinary people. Mankind cannot advance unless it abandons the road of imperialism and unless it opts for socialism and communism. That is the inevitable demand of history.

The issue of the roads and forms of the transition of different countries to socialism and of the means that consolidate socialist relations is arising with special sharpness in these conditions. Communist parties and the world Communist movement as a whole therefore attach great importance to the problem of the road to socialism. Development of this question had an important place at the very beginning of the moulding of Marxian theory and right from the first steps in the working class struggle.

1 Marx and Engels on the Transformation of Society

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels gave the proletariat an invincible weapon in the fight against exploiters and for socialism and naturally in spite of all its detractors. Marxism continues to be the centre of ideological struggle to evoke revolutionary enthusiasm in workers and rage and hatred among their class enemies.

In accordance with the theme of our book we shall limit

ourselves to a survey of Marxian theory in that aspect of it solely that explains the matter of the forms of the transition to socialism

Marx and Engels did their theoretical and practical work under premonopoly capitalism when the objective preconditions for victory of the socialist revolution had not yet finally matured but they were already able then with quite limited revolutionary experience to lay the foundations of its theory to suggest the most important issues of the transition to socialism which have not lost their theoretical and practical value and topicality in our day

Socialist ideas which had spread mainly in the form of various schools and trends of utopian socialism in whose conceptions there were not only beautiful dreams but also bold guesses about the society and man of the future existed well before Marx and Engels Their authors can be divided into three main groups communist utopians socialist utopians and petty bourgeois socialists

The *communist utopians* advanced the idea of establishing social equality through the abolition of private property Advocates of revolutionary action like Babeuf Dezamy and Blanqui considered it necessary to carry on propaganda and organisational work among the proletariat and to organise secret conspiracies against the existing system Not understanding the essence of social relations the communist utopians considered human nature itself the foundation for establishing communist society Only after the revolutions of the middle of the nineteenth century in Europe did they begin gradually to become aware of the need to eradicate class differences and wage a class struggle At the time of the rise of Marxism the communist utopians had already come to recognise that the road to social equality lay through revolution and through people's power necessary in order to repulse possible intrigues by counter revolution

The classical representatives of *utopian socialism*—Saint Simon Fourier and Robert Owen—also started from the point that the ideals of freedom and equality were unrealisable under capitalism They subjected the capitalist system to all round reasoned criticism demonstrating the need to replace it by socialism Some of their ideas were later adopted by scientific socialism for example that of planned management of the economy the need for all members of society to work the need to abolish wage labour and to convert the state into an instrument for regulating society's economic affairs etc But the socialist utopians who did not have a scientific method of analysing social processes and did not grasp the laws of social development did not see the real roads and means for transforming capitalist society into a

socialist one and did not understand the revolutionary role of the proletariat

One thing is common to all three (Engels wrote) Not one of them appears as a representative of the interests of that proletariat which historical development had in the meantime produced Like the French philosophers they do not claim to emancipate a particular class to begin with but all humanity at once¹

The socialist utopians hoped to realise their socialist idea gradually by convincing society of its beneficial character They appealed to members of the ruling classes rather than to the workers Saint Simon for example considered the perfecting of scientific knowledge morals and religion to be the basis of the development of society

Petty bourgeois socialists formed their views later when capitalist relations were already more developed They reflected the mood of petty producers squeezed by the growth of large scale capitalist industry The petty bourgeois socialists rejected revolutionary methods and carried on propaganda for reformist ones They called for the abolition of large scale production through broad organisation of co operation and with the aid of the state One of their leading spokesmen Pierre Proudhon founded a whole trend that fought Marxism for many years.

Sometimes when they touch on utopian or petty bourgeois socialism some writers are inclined to treat these trends solely as a stage already past in the development of socio political thought as past history But things are not as simple as that The theories of utopian socialism are constantly being revived and adapted to modern conditions in reformist circles of the working-class movement in conceptions that spokesmen of petty bourgeois strata drawn into the maelstrom of the class struggle create and advocate That is why Marx and Engels sweeping all round critique of utopian and petty bourgeois conceptions of social development has not only not lost its significance today but also serves Marxist Leninists as an effective ideological weapon in the struggle for a revolutionary transformation of modern society

In opposition to these conceptions the Marxian theory of socialist revolution is based on a solid foundation of a dialectical materialist understanding of history and its driving forces on a comprehensive analysis of the contradictions of capitalism on a profound substantiation of the world history

¹ Frederick Engels *Socialism Utopian and Scientific* In Karl Marx and Frederick Engels *Selected Works* in three volumes Vol 3 (Progress Publishers Moscow 1976), p 117

cal mission of the working class. In *Capital* Marx gave a scientific explanation of just what was the essence of capitalism and bared the secrets of surplus value and the exploitation of labour. He showed that objective trends of economic development were leading to a solution of the antagonisms of the capitalist system through its replacement by a socialist system.

The root problems of the transition from capitalism to socialism were set out in such works of Marx and Engels as the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*¹, the Address of the Central Authority to the Communist League, *The Class Struggles in France*, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, *Civil War in France* etc.²

Marx and Engels considered the socialist revolution as a world historical process leading to communism and involving the establishing of fundamentally new relations of production based on common social ownership of the means of production, gradual abolition of classes and class contradictions, transformation of the constitutional political system on the basis of people's power. They put forward a thesis of two stages in the development of communist society and showed moreover that the transition from capitalism to the first stage of communism i.e. socialism would take a certain historical period and would be accomplished in accordance with patterns common to all countries. These patterns included the following points:

(1) the leading role of the working class and its party at all stages of the struggle for socialism

(2) an alliance of the proletariat and peasantry and other strata of the working people

(3) smashing of the state machinery of capitalism and the establishing of state power of the proletariat i.e. power constituted as the state of the dictatorship of the proletariat

(4) abolition of capitalist ownership of the main means of production and consolidation of social ownership

The theory of the passage to socialism based on knowledge of these patterns is one of the pinnacles of socialist thought and is inseparable from the other aspects of Marxism which was developed from the advances of world science and raised social science to a qualitatively new level. In his article *The Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism* Lenin wrote that

¹ See Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, 1978, pp. 477-519.

² All the enumerated works of Marx and Engels are published as separate volumes by Progress Publishers, Moscow, or in their *Collected Works* published jointly by Progress Publishers, Lawrence & Wishart (London) and International Publishers (New York).

the genius of Marx consists precisely in his having furnished answers to questions already raised by the foremost minds of mankind. His doctrine emerged as the direct and immediate *continuation* of the teachings of the greatest representatives of philosophy, political economy and socialism.¹

Marx and Engels' discovery of the laws of the transition to socialism was the result of their generalisation of the experience of class struggle in the era of capitalism and their deep study of the objective trends of its development and was closely linked with their practical activity in the working-class movement inseparable from their theoretical work.

Their theory of revolution and of the passage from capitalism to socialism showed the true road of the workers' movement and threw a brilliant light of scientific analysis onto the outlook of the revolutionary struggle for a new social system.

They were not only great theoreticians but also outstanding activists and organisers of the working-class movement who led the first international unions of the proletariat. It was precisely their analysis of practice that helped them to enrich revolutionary theory and to bring out the patterns of the transition from capitalism to socialism.

The strength of the revolutionary theory created by Marx and Engels is that it is a reflection and enrichment of the practical experience of the struggle of the working class in various countries.

Let us touch for a moment on their attitude to the revolutionary opportunities and possibilities in Russia. This is by no means a partial or particular matter but is linked with important issues of principle regarding the interaction of the revolutionary movements of different countries and the applicability of Marxian theory in regions with different levels of socio-economic development. It is not fortuitous that capitalist ideologists try to hush up and conceal the views of Marx and Engels on this issue or to distort garble and misrepresent them claiming for example that Marx denied the revolutionary role precisely of Russia because of the absence there of an economic basis of capitalism. Reformist-minded theorists of the working-class movement are also inclined to such opinions treating the revolutionary theory of Marxism as the reflection of an exclusively Western specific of social development having nothing essential in common with social processes in Russia.

¹ V I Lenin *Collected Works* Vol 19 1973 (here and elsewhere Progress Publishers Moscow) p 23

Any unprejudiced student of the work of Marx and Engels can satisfy himself without difficulty that they deeply analysed the possibilities and outlook for development of the revolutionary movement in Russia surveyed the situation there in the light of the general patterns of class struggle which they had discovered and took the specific features of Russian reality into account. They pointed out the revolutionary significance of the struggle to abolish serfdom and for the national rights of the peoples enslaved by czarism. In 1858 Marx wrote that fuel has amassed [in Russia] under its feet that a strong wind from the west can suddenly fan into flames.¹ And he concluded from the Polish national liberation uprising of 1863 that the era of revolution is now again fairly opened in Europe.²

Later in the mid 1880s Engels repeatedly remarked on the key importance of Russia for successful realisation of the revolution in Europe and on the possibility that the first revolution might take place there. In a letter to August Bebel in December 1884 he said that as things are at present an impulse from outside can scarcely come from anywhere but Russia.³ And at the beginning of 1888 he remarked that

a revolution in Russia at the present time would save Europe from the disaster of a general war and would be the beginning of the revolution throughout the world.⁴

Marx and Engels did not consider that the impending revolution in Russia would be a socialist one or grow into one. The conditions at that time gave them no grounds for such a conclusion which Lenin drew later after study of the conditions of the new imperialist era. They linked the Russian revolution with the need for far reaching bourgeois democratic reforms and therefore likened it to the French bourgeois revolution of the end of the eighteenth century, the most radical of all the bourgeois revolutions. The quotations cited above however quite obviously show that they considered the revolutionary movement in Russia as a component part of the international revolutionary process and as a factor moreover that was beginning to acquire a decisive role in it at the end of the nineteenth

¹ Karl Marx, *Die politischen Parteien in England. Die Lage in Europa*. In Karl Marx/Friedrich Engels *Werke*, Bd. 12 (Dietz Verlag, Berlin 1976), S. 505.

² Karl Marx, *Letter to Engels*, 13 February 1863. In Karl Marx/Friedrich Engels *Werke*, Bd. 30 (Dietz Verlag, Berlin 1964), S. 324.

³ Engels to Bebel, December 11, 1884. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels *Selected Correspondence* (Progress Publishers, Moscow 1975), p. 360.

⁴ Engels to Ion Nădejde in Jassy, 4 January 1888. In Karl Marx/Friedrich Engels *Werke*, Bd. 37 (Dietz Verlag, Berlin 1977), S. 6.

century And this appreciation was made which is specially indicative at a time when Russia was much further behind the leading countries of the West in economic development than in say 1917 and it was a matter then not of a socialist revolution but of a bourgeois-democratic one Nevertheless while characterising the aims of the revolutions in Russia and the West as heterogeneous Marx and Engels estimated the prospects of realising these aims in the light of the general patterns of the world process of the transition from capitalism to socialism

As for the specifically Russian features reference to which today is the main argument of the supporters of regional schemes that counterpose the roads of the socialist transformation of society in Russia and the West to one another Marx and Engels carefully considered them in the same way as in any other country they studied

To me (Engels wrote to Vera Zasulich in 1885) the important thing is that the impulse in Russia should be given that the revolution should break out Whether this faction or that faction gives the signal whether it happens under this flag or that is a matter of complete indifference to me If it were a palace conspiracy it would be swept away tomorrow In a country where the situation is so strained where the revolutionary elements have accumulated to such a degree where the economic conditions of the enormous mass of the people become daily more impossible where every stage of social development is represented from the primitive commune to modern large scale industry and high finance and where all these contradictions are arbitrarily held in check by an unexampled despotism a despotism which is becoming more and more unbearable to a youth in whom the dignity and intelligence of the nation are united—when 1789 has once been launched in such a country 1793 will not be far away¹

The real attitude of Marx and Engels to the problem of revolutionary transformations in Russia thus not only does not confirm the views of those who treat this matter as a purely Russian phenomenon but on the contrary refutes them Another point is also important when Marx and Engels analysed the features of the Russian liberation movement on the basis of their theory and allowing for the general patterns of the revolution they had discovered they thereby successfully applied the revolutionary theory of Marxism for the first time to the study and explanation of the social processes

¹ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels *Selected Correspondence*, p 363

in Russia. This alone shows the unsoundness of the attempts to limit the sphere of application of Marxism to countries of the classical development of capitalism. But the main evidence of course is that the Marxist theory of the passage to socialism founded largely on a generalisation of the socio-economic practice of the classical countries of capitalism viz Great Britain and Germany with its uncompleted bourgeois revolution was successfully realised during the bourgeois democratic revolutions and later the socialist one in Russia where the conditions of social development differed greatly from the West European models. The experience of the socialist transformations in Russia having enriched the revolutionary theory of Marxism in turn broadened the possibilities of applying it in practice in recent decades in countries with very different levels of socio-economic development.

The main patterns of revolutionary development and of the passage from capitalism to socialism discovered by Marx and Engels are finding convincing confirmation in our day. The advance of socialism is showing that these patterns are truly universal. It is impossible to abolish them because they have an objective character that is why all the attempts of Marxism's opponents to refute its theory of the transition to socialism are in vain. We recalled one of them above namely that of trying to picture it as some sort of armchair doctrine or to link it with a romantic ideal. That kind of treatment is usual with capitalist ideologists who reject the very idea of socialism and represent it as an unrealisable abstraction. Social reformists distort Marxist theory in a different way. While recognising the substantiated character of its initial propositions for instance and even of some of its conclusions for their time and while not denying in principle the possibility of a socialist transformation of society they try to put this theory into the historical archives by references to the new features of our time and the evolution of capitalist society. In their interpretation the Marxian theory of the transition to socialism is no more than a product of the nineteenth century useless for modern conditions. When it was created they declare capitalism was quite different today they say it has qualitatively altered and the antagonism between the proletariat and the capitalist class has disappeared while capitalist society in their view has become democratic and socialist elements have appeared in it. All that social reformists say makes a revolutionary transformation of the capitalist system unnecessary socialism will gradually grow out of capitalism. Therefore they say Marxian theory is out of date.

Marxism does not grow old as science and cannot. It can

be enriched developed and supplemented with new content but just as the latest discoveries of modern physics do not abolish the general laws of motion formulated by Newton so none of the new experience of the class struggle can abolish the general laws of the development of human society and the revolutionary replacement of capitalism by communism discovered by Marxism

The general regularities of the revolutionary transition to socialism formulated by Marx and Engels retain their full significance today Whatever aspect of the theory of revolution that we take we always start from the tenets of Marxism—be it the idea of the historic mission of the working class the consistent bearer of revolutionism the main decisive force in the fight to transform capitalist society into a socialist and communist one be it the conception of the alliance of the proletariat and other exploited classes like the peasantry and such strata as the intelligentsia be it the proposition of the inevitability of a dictatorship of the proletariat in the period of the transition from capitalism to socialism be it the conclusion about the need to transform relations of production through the introduction of social ownership of the main means of production

It is the conclusions of Marx and Engels that help Communist Parties to work out the forms and directions of the fight for socialism correctly when there are significant shifts in the social structure of society because of the development of state monopoly capitalism It is these conclusions that underlie the strategic thesis of Marxism Leninism that the socialist revolution like other social revolutions is a long protracted process covering all aspects of society's affairs The idea of the impact of the victories of socialism in individual countries on the development of the world revolution and of the interdependence of all the streams of the world revolutionary process is also linked precisely with the ideas of Marx and Engels And it is on their ideas that the principle of the leading guiding role of the Communist Party in the period of the preparation for and carrying through of the socialist revolution and during the building of socialism is based

And surely the most important slogan of the Communist movement remains that of the unity of the working class for which Marx and Engels called That slogan has made it possible to achieve advances in the revolutionary struggle in capitalist countries in building socialism and in opening up perspectives for victory of the working people throughout the world

Marxism had already demonstrated its superiority over other conceptions of social development and won the

theoretical battle imposed on it during its rise and consolidation Marx and Engels demonstrated the bankruptcy of right and left opportunist interpretations of the problems of the transition from capitalism to socialism

The struggle they waged against opportunism on this issue was subsequently continued in two directions against the right and against Leftists Today too the Communist movement has to fight these two trends represented on the one hand by social reformists and on the other by leftist extremists and in this fight it relies on the experience of Marx and Engels Their irreconcilability toward any deviation from proletarian theory and their ardour and ability to argue in proof of the truth teaches Communists to be flexible and at the same time principled and to defend the principles of the fight for a socialist transformation of society firmly and consistently

In spite of all their wiles and tricks and attempts to mount an ideological counter attack the opponents of Marxism are losing the battle of ideas In spite of the efforts of anti-communist propaganda interest in the Marxian theory of the transition to socialism and in study of the practice of building the new society in the countries of real socialism is growing throughout the world Even its enemies are forced to recognise the historical force of Marxism in one way or another

Marxism continues to live in the hearts and minds of millions of men and to inspire the most important social movement of our epoch

the French anti-communist Jean Lacroix wrote back in the 1950s ¹ Even among people hitherto far from socialist ideas there is now a growing interest in Marxian economics the British business journal *The Economist* has remarked ²

Historical development is following the road predicted by Marxist theory—the world historical road of the transition from capitalism to socialism The Marxism of the present epoch is Leninism the legitimate successor and continuer of the whole theoretical and practical revolutionary cause left to humanity by Marx and Engels

2 Lenin on the Roads of Struggle for Socialism

In the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries capitalism entered the last stage of its development that of

¹ J Lacroix *Marxisme Existentialisme Personnalisme* (PUF Paris 1950)
p 5

² *The Economist* 1979 273 7108 129

imperialism This stage completed the relatively peaceful development of capitalism A revolutionary atmosphere began to be created in society The socialist revolution came onto the agenda

The new epoch posed a number of acute problems to Marxists and on their answer to them depended their understanding of the essence of the revolutionary process the choice of roads to the emancipation of the working class and masses of the working people from the yoke of capital For the first time the working-class movement was faced with the issue of developing the Marxian theory of the transition to socialism in a sharply changing historical situation and in conditions that Marx and Engels had not known and could not analyse But then as today the point was not whether it was necessary to develop Marxism the point was how to develop it

Social Democracy grouped around the right wing leaders of the Second International and officially counting themselves heirs of Marxism answered this point in their own way ¹ The new developments of this period served its theorists as grounds for new views on the fate of capitalism and tasks and prospects of the working-class movement

They drew attention to the fact that free-competition capitalism had given way to monopoly capitalism but they did not see that as the basis for a sharpening of all the contradictions of the capitalist economy but as a possibility of converting it into a single world organisation and rationally operating trust

They also did not miss the turn toward political reaction caused by imperialism They noted that it threatened bourgeois democracy itself but their statements in defence of that democracy in fact became support for the power of capital

The leaders of right wing Social Democracy felt even if they were not conscious of it that the historical initiative had passed from the capitalist class to the working class and they did everything in their power to reduce the activity of the working masses to an exclusively trade union craft movement so that their political role would not go beyond the limits of election campaigns and would be confined to forcing modest reforms through parliament

Nor were they deaf to the danger of world war presented by imperialism warned of it and signed anti war manifestos But when the guns began to roar in 1914 they slid into

¹ The Second International was an international organisation of socialist parties founded in 1889 At the beginning of the twentieth century right wing tendencies gained the upper hand in it

social-chauvinism and justification of the imperialist war. They could not finally help seeing that the capitalist world had been brought to the socialist revolution by the very course of history but they shrank from the role of organisers and leaders of the revolution and came out in fact as ideological and political defenders of the interests of the capitalist class.

That is how the new epoch looked in the theoretical works and practical activity of the leaders of the Second International and it was clear when Lenin wrote in 1913 that this period would bring new triumphs of Marxism¹ that he was not referring to official Social Democratic Marxism.

Marxism could only be continued by a theory in which its scientific character and revolutionism were organically and inseparably merged. Leninism became such a theory being the realisation of objectively maturing needs for a scientific interpretation of the new conditions and for a revolutionary strategy and tactics for the working class corresponding to them. Lenin's thought was directed to the development of Marxism along a road differing in principle from those along which the ideological and political leaders of the Second International were aimlessly groping. The kernel of this difference comes out clearly when we compare Lenin's views on the issues referred to above and those of social reformist theorists.

In opposition to reformist conceptions of organised capitalism Lenin created a scientific theory of imperialism and carried it to the conclusion that monopoly capitalism was the last stage of the capitalist formation and the eve of the socialist revolution.

In opposition to opportunist attempts to integrate the working-class movement into the political system of capitalist society and the state Lenin showed (1) that the hegemony of the proletariat was a factor determining victorious development of the revolutionary struggle of the working masses and all progressive democratic forces against the oppression of monopolies and capital and (2) that it was necessary in order to realise this leading role of the working class for it to have its own consistently revolutionary party.

In opposition to the conciliators and collaborators who gave way to militarist chauvinist frenzy Lenin concluded from the military aggravation of the contradictions of imperialism that international solidarity of the working people was extremely important in order to maintain peace and advanced the revolutionary slogan of turning imperialist war if it were ever

¹ See V. I. Lenin, *The Historical Destiny of the Doctrine of Karl Marx, Collected Works*, Vol. 18, 1973, p. 585.

unleashed into a war against the oppressors and exploiters and against the social vectors of militarism themselves

Finally in opposition to the social reformists who were scared of the very idea of the impending transfer of power to the working class Lenin developed a rigorous theory of socialist revolution demonstrated the possibility and even the necessity of its victory first in one country steadfastly taught the party and working masses the art of revolutionary struggle and personally led the direct preparations for and carrying through of the Great October Revolution of 1917

Lenin's polemic with the leaders of the Second International was not at bottom a dispute about the theoretical letter of Marxism but a clash of opposing class approaches to Marx's work

We can easily imagine what would have happened (and did happen in the reformist trend of the working-class movement) if opportunism had gained the ascendancy in the development of Marxian thought the working class without clear revolutionary perspectives and lacking theoretically developed forms of struggle would have been in the toils of a compromising conciliatory ideology and policy and in the humiliating and (for it) hopeless situation of the social partnership that opportunists had saddled it with (and which in fact was a partnership of rider and horse in which the capitalists were the rider)

Reformists from Social Democracy while speaking in well rehearsed Marxian terminology in fact adapted themselves to the interests of capital and defended them by their ideas and political manoeuvring And subsequently when in many cases they inevitably without exception confirmed by their own activity that their interpretation of Marxism led to nothing more than a change of the political stage set that concealed the domination of monopolies and capital

Lenin on the contrary approached the fundamental problems of the time and correspondingly the development of the Marxian theory of the transition to socialism from the class standpoint of the proletariat The supreme aim of the working class the possibilities of realising them and the roads to the most effective actual realisation of them in the concrete conditions of one country or another—such were the criteria by which his thought was checked and verified He proceeded from life from the real needs of the working class movement so that his theory as it was formulated became one with the practice of the class struggle and a more and more active factor in the revolutionary process

Sometimes Lenin's work is interpreted as simply a reaction to opportunism which had become more active in the working-class movement after the death of Marx and Engels

That is a supreme simplification that distorts the matter. Leninism expressed objective tendencies in the working-class movement and revolutionary process: it was a natural legitimate continuation of Marxism with which it constitutes a single whole: the revolutionary theory of the international working class.

Thus there is only one answer to how to develop Marxism and that is Lenin's. The theorists of the Second International could not understand the shifts in the development of capitalism and determine the roads for the working class's struggle. They sought confirmation of their dogmatic ideas in the new facts of the development of society and drew conclusions from them that contradicted the interests of the proletariat. Furthermore, they began an offensive against revolutionary Marxism that was particularly intensified after the death of Engels in 1895.

The offensive was waged in two directions. First, the opportunists tried to hush up and gloss over Marxist theory or to stress those sides of it that had no direct significance for concrete revolutionary practice and moreover took up an exclusively revisionist position and garbled and misrepresented the creative character of Marxism.

One of their favourite tricks was and still is to oppose Marx in one way or another to Marxism as an integral theory. They asserted, for example, that Marx's early works in which he was still only formulating his views are theoretically more valuable and correct than works like *Capital*. Leading theorists and propagandists of Marxism were already fighting these statements in those years. In particular Franz Mehring in Germany and Georgi Plekhanov in Russia opposed such views, and Lenin gave a theoretically substantiated conception of the creative and spiritual evolution of Marx, especially in his well-known article "Karl Marx".¹

On the other hand the revisionists began to falsify Marxism, especially its theory of the transition to socialism. In Germany Bernstein and following him Kautsky, Legien, Scheidemann, Schippel, Sombart and Vandervelde (Belgium), Branting (Sweden), the Mensheviks (Russia) and other revisionists from various parties tried to revise Marx's theory of the inevitable death of capitalism and asserted that capitalism was every day displaying a greater and greater capacity to adapt and that production was becoming more and more differentiated.

Bernstein and others put forward an idea of the gradual introduction of socialism in which the trade union and political struggle for social reforms would lead to a

¹ See V. I. Lenin *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, 1977, pp. 43-91.

strengthening of society's control over the conditions of production the role of the owner of capital would be more and more reduced by legislation to that of an administrator and in the end the direction and management of industry would be taken away from capitalists. In the revisionists' view the introduction of socialism was possible through trade unions which would take over industrial profit through workers co-operatives that would guarantee the disappearance of commercial profit and also through democratisation of the state. Bernstein made an attempt to give a theoretical justification to adaptation of the working-class movement to the interests of the capitalist class and formulated his views most clearly declaring that the final goal whatever it was was nothing for him and the movement everything.¹

Revisionist distortions created a serious danger to the working class movement depriving its struggle of a socialist aim and perspective.

Lenin was able by his theoretical and practical work to give answers to the questions facing the revolutionary movement. He rose to the height of the new tasks and played an outstanding role in the theoretical development of Marxism. The appeal unanimously adopted by the International Meeting of Communist and Workers Parties held in Moscow in 1969 on the centenary of his birth declared

Lenin was an eminent man of thought who developed in every aspect the science which Marx and Engels established: dialectical materialism, the theory of the socialist revolution and the building of communist society.²

We have not set ourselves the aim here of demonstrating Lenin's whole contribution to revolutionary creative Marxism. We are concerned simply to develop certain points of the theory of socialist revolution and of the forms of the passage from capitalism to socialism and to bring out what it was that was new which he contributed to the solution of these problems. A whole revolutionary period in the affairs of mankind is linked with his name and work. Lenin gave answers to very topical pressing issues posed by the course of historical development and developed in a comprehensive way the theory of socialist revolution and the building of

¹ Reading the present-day writings and speeches of other theorists speaking in the name of the working-class movement of the West and trying to prove the necessity of an evolutionary road to socialism, the question arises whether they are not repeating old hackneyed formulas of this type long refuted by the practice of the class struggle as the last word in theory.

² *International Meeting of Communist and Workers Parties, Moscow 1969* (Peace and Socialism Publishers, Prague 1969) p. 40.

communist society armed the Russian and whole international revolutionary movement with a scientifically justified strategy and tactics and led the working class's struggle to realise the ideals of socialism

The dialectical method characteristic of all Lenin's theoretical and practical work was brilliantly displayed in his treatment of the forms of the transition to socialism. He pointed out many times that a revolutionary must be guided by general principles and apply them in practice in accordance with the concrete conditions of the struggle

The obligation to maintain revolutionary traditions (he wrote) calls at the same time for an analysis of the conditions for applying them and not for a simple repetition of revolutionary slogans that have meaning in special circumstances¹

In essence the living soul of Marxism is a concrete analysis of a concrete situation, he stressed². A Marxist, he considered, needed to know how to adapt schemes to facts³. But a Marxist must never abandon the ground of careful analysis of class relations⁴.

Lenin deeply and comprehensively analysed the experience of social development and the class struggle in various countries, building his conclusions on the facts of real life. He took the latest advances of world science into account, including the contribution of progressive thinkers to the treatment of social issues. His theory of the revolutionary transformation of exploiter society had an international character and his stand reflected the patterns of all world development. Lenin's work, Leonid Brezhnev said at the centenary meeting,

incorporated everything that had been produced by mankind's best minds, generalising and fusing into a single whole the worldwide experience of the working people's class struggle⁵.

The international character of Leninism is displayed in the following ways:

in that, having arisen on a firm basis of Marxism, it was able to express and generalise the experience not only of the Russian working-class movement but also of

¹ V. I. Lenin *Collected Works*, 5th Russian Edition, Vol. 16 (Politizdat Moscow, 1974), p. 474.

² V. I. Lenin *Kommunismus Collected Works*, Vol. 31, 1974, p. 166.

³ V. I. Lenin *Letters on Tactics Collected Works*, Vol. 24, 1974, p. 46.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ L. I. Brezhnev *Following Lenin's Course* (Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1972), p. 262.

the whole international movement and all its contingents

in its opening of the way in new historical conditions for a merging of the building of socialism and communism the Communist and workers movement and the national liberation struggle of the people in a single revolutionary process

in its raising of the banner of internationalism in opposition to chauvinism and nationalism and its saving of Marxism from the degeneration that the opportunist leaders of the Second International were leading it to

in being the ideological basis for educating the working class all working people and Communists in a spirit of fidelity to the lofty principles of international solidarity and the cause of communism

Leninists have never been slaves to the letter of Leninism but are always checking their ideas conclusions and practice against the authoritative recommendations and views that Lenin left to them They always consult Lenin as Lenin consulted Marx and always will Communists regard Lenin's work not only as a method but also as a theory and a guide to action in today's revolutionary struggle Twentieth-century experience of class battles (and we shall endeavour to confirm this) has shown that only when we are guided by Lenin's work can we understand the essence and character of the revolutionary changes taking place in the world correctly appraise the role of the forces involved in them correctly map out the prospects for the development of the world socialist revolution win it and build socialism

In that connection we cannot ignore the views spread in working class circles abroad that the international role of Lenin's theory of socialist revolution is limited by chronological or geographical contexts While certain Western ideologists direct readers (as we said above) to early Marx in this case in particular on the contrary they deny the international significance of Lenin's outstanding works written in his young years at the dawn of the founding of the Bolshevik Party such as *What Are the Friends of the People and How They Fight the Social Democrats?* *What Is to Be Done?* *One Step Forward Two Steps Back*, *Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution* *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*¹ in which

¹ These works are published as separate titles by Progress Publishers Moscow and will be found in the early volumes of Lenin's *Collected Works* also published by Progress Publishers

he laid the ideological and organisational theoretical and practical foundations of a party of a new type and substantiated the main propositions of the theory of socialist revolution. Statements that Lenin's theory of the party and revolution were created only during World War I are quite groundless and without substantiation. Such a view distorting the history of the development of scientific theory creates a false impression that Lenin linked the possibility of the revolution and its victory under the leadership of the party solely with war. It also belittles his preceding and subsequent theoretical work.

We must make another reservation as well. A view has become quite common in the West that Lenin's theory of revolution covers only the period of direct transfer of power from the capitalist class to the proletariat.

Lenin created the theory of socialist revolution and of the roads for passing from capitalism to socialism throughout his theoretical and revolutionary activity. The range of issues covered by this theory is wide and all-embracing and is not limited either geographically or chronologically. They were issues linked with the formation of the preconditions and with the carrying through of the socialist revolution and consolidation of its victory, the building of socialism and communism and the interaction of the revolutionary forces in individual countries and on an international scale.

Lenin's theory of the transition to socialism is a single conception all of whose elements are closely linked and reciprocally affect each other. It is based on a deep comprehensive analysis of imperialism as the last stage of capitalism and the eve of the socialist revolution and was crowned with an unfolding of the patterns of the transition from capitalism to socialism and disclosure of the roads both to victory of the socialist revolution on a world scale and to the building of socialism and communism.

We shall dwell later in more detail on the separate aspects of Lenin's theory of the roads to the transition from capitalism to socialism. Here I would like to single out one point, that of the link between his idea of the victory of socialism first in one country and the outlook for development of the world revolution. This is a fundamental point and grasping of all the other propositions of Lenin's theory largely depends on it.

Lenin formulated conclusions about the possibilities of the victory of socialism initially in one country and of the impossibility of its simultaneous victory in all countries in the following works: *On the Slogan for a United States of Europe* and *The Military Programme of the Proletarian Revolution*.

Uneven economic and political development is an absolute law of capitalism (he wrote in 1915) Hence the victory of socialism is possible first in several or even in one capitalist country alone¹

In 1916 he developed this inference further

The development of capitalism proceeds extremely unevenly in different countries From this it follows irrefutably that socialism cannot achieve victory simultaneously in *all* countries It will achieve victory first in one or several countries while the others will for some time remain bourgeois or pre bourgeois²

Lenin understood the unevenness of the economic and political development of capitalism in a very broad sense as the uneven and asynchronous nature of the development of capitalist countries and as unevenness of the maturing of the objective and subjective factors of the revolution within each of them He pointed out that the contradictions and clashes of antagonistic forces undermined and weakened world imperialism the chain of which would break at its weakest links in countries where the objective and subjective conditions for socialist revolution had matured It was a matter moreover of the aggregate of these conditions

Lenin by no means considered that only a developed country could be a weak link or on the contrary that the weak link was inevitably associated with a low level of capitalist development He resolutely opposed the assertion that the imperialist system would break where the economy was weakly developed

Marx and Engels considered at one time that Germany would be the first country where a proletarian revolution would take place then they turned their gaze to Russia suggesting that only a bourgeois democratic revolution was possible there which would give an impulse to socialist revolutions in the West Lenin too originally held such views voicing the idea that the first land to make a proletarian revolution would be one of the most developed countries and put many hopes especially on Germany But being faithful to a concrete historical approach he saw that the real course of history was such that Russia would inevitably become the country where there would not only be a bourgeois-democratic revolution (as Marx and Engels had correctly thought in their day) but also a socialist revolution

¹ V I Lenin On the Slogan for a United States of Europe *Collected Works* Vol. 21 p 342

² V I Lenin The Military Programme of the Proletarian Revolution *Collected Works*, Vol 23 1964 p 79

and he directed all the activity of the Party of Bolsheviks and the revolutionary masses of the country to preparing for that revolution. Other countries he considered would follow Russia and he had every right to say: Our banking on the world revolution has on the whole been fully justified.¹

Lenin did not tie the possibility of revolutionary reforms in other countries to concrete periods of time, stressing that

no decree has yet been issued stating that all countries must live according to the Bolshevik revolutionary calendar and even if it were issued it would not be observed.²

And he noted

West European revolutions will perhaps proceed more smoothly nevertheless very many years will be required for the reorganisation of the whole world for the reorganisation of the majority of the countries.³

In his article *Fourth Anniversary of the October Revolution* he wrote

We have made the start. When at what date and time and the proletarians of which nation will complete this process is not important. The important thing is that the ice has been broken, the road is open, the way has been shown.⁴

Nevertheless he recognised that the rates of development of the revolution in the West would be slower than expected as he said at the 3rd Congress of the Communist International (Comintern)

Actually events did not proceed along as straight a line as we had expected. In the other big capitalistically more developed countries the revolution has not broken out to this day. We must now thoroughly prepare for revolution and make a deep study of its concrete development in the advanced capitalist countries.⁵

Lenin saw the specific feature of the West in the maturity of the economic preconditions of socialism in the developed character of democratic institutions that put their stamp on the world outlook and forms of struggle of the working class.

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Seventh All Russia Congress of Soviets*, December 5-9 1919, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, 1977, p. 208.

² V. I. Lenin, *Eighth Congress of the R.C.P. (B.)*, March 18-23, 1919, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, 1977, pp. 174-75.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

⁴ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, 1976, p. 57.

⁵ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, 1977, pp. 480-81.

and in the wide spread of reformist illusions among working people. In that connection he stressed that it is more difficult to begin a socialist revolution precisely in industrially developed capitalist countries, one reason for which he saw in the fact that the working class is faced in these countries by an enemy that not only disposes of a powerful armoury of economic, political and ideological means for affecting the masses but has also learned from vast experience the art of employing various tricks to split the working class. Lenin noted that the capitalist class of the USA and Great Britain had no equal in the world in the art of deceiving, corrupting and bribing the workers and called on Communists to seek ways of approaching the socialist revolution that were consonant with all these conditions.

While noting the specific features of the position in various countries, Lenin at the same time considered the possibilities of revolutionary reforms in them within the context of a single world revolutionary process and pointed out that whereas the national liberation movement used to be part of the general democratic movement, it had become part of the world socialist revolution since the triumph of the Russian socialist revolution.

We would be very poor revolutionaries (he wrote) if in the proletariat's great war of liberation for socialism we did not know how to utilise *every* popular movement against *every single* disaster imperialism brings in order to intensify and extend the crisis.¹

The development of the national liberation movement weakened capitalism in the metropolitan countries and led on the other hand to a strengthening and extension of the revolutionary forces in the colonies and dependent countries. The socialist revolution in turn had to support the peoples of the countries being emancipated. Finally he saw a third aspect of the relation between socialism and the national liberation movement in the aid given by socialist countries to the direct transition of economically backward countries to socialism. In countries where the proletariat was weakly developed and could not be the leader of the revolution, he noted its role would be filled by the working class in countries where socialism had already triumphed.

Lenin developed proletarian internationalism on the basis of revolutionary practice in the epoch of the transition from capitalism to socialism, defined the principles of the relations between the socialist state and the revolutionary working class.

¹ V. I. Lenin, *The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up*, Collected Works, Vol. 22, p. 357.

movement and between the Communist Parties of socialist and capitalist countries. The Communist International he founded operated on these principles. They have retained their significance and value to our day in spite of the change in the form of the relations between parties and the absence of a single international organisation of the world Communist movement.

An important element in Lenin's theory of the possibility of socialism being victorious in one country was the thesis of armed defence of the socialist state and of just wars against capitalists striving to smash victorious socialism. At the same time he resolutely opposed the Trotskyist idea of the export of revolution and of the gratifying of countries where the conditions for revolutionary transformations had not matured.¹

The ideological opponents of Marxism-Leninism in other countries concentrate their main blow against the international aspect of Lenin's theory of socialist revolution and the question of the patterns of the revolutionary transition to socialism. Anti-Leninist attacks take several directions; the main ones are as follows:

(1) Lenin's theory of struggle for a socialist society, they say, was of significance only for Russia and cannot be extended to other countries. Leninism is a purely Russian phenomenon that could arise only on the soil of a weakly developed country.

The most convincing answer to that is the actual practice of realising Lenin's ideas on the transition to socialism in a whole number of victorious revolutions (including ones in countries with a high level of economic development): the anti-capitalist struggle of the working class of various countries and the national liberation movement, the advanced forces of which have taken up his idea of a non-capitalist path of development. We shall speak about this many times and more circumstantially in subsequent chapters; here we would simply stress that Lenin's theory of the revolutionary transformation of society like Leninism as a whole expresses the unity of the national and the international in the evolution of the revolutionary process.

(2) The opponents of Leninism assert that Lenin's theory of the transformation of society was built up without allowing for the outlook for revolutionary development; that it did not go beyond a description of the forms and means of the revolutionary upheaval and that it is therefore useless for

¹ Trotskyism is an ideological-political petty bourgeois trend in the working-class movement that masks its opportunist essence by leftist radical phrases. It is so called after Leon Trotsky (1879-1940).

explaining the patterns of the transition from capitalism to socialism as a historical process. They thus arbitrarily disparage the theoretical significance of this theory and reduce it simply to a method of revolutionary action.

To try and belittle Lenin's theory of revolutionary transformations by kow-towing to its method and at the same time denying its basic propositions is in fact to do violence to the method itself because Lenin's method is this same revolutionary theory which serves both as an instrument for understanding the world and as a guide to action. Leninism is the embodiment of the methodology of revolutionary thinking and revolutionary action. By means of this methodology however Lenin made very great theoretical discoveries that are also first and foremost the substance of his contribution to the development of the Marxian theory of the transition to socialism.

(3) Attacks on Lenin's theory of the roads and forms of revolutionary transformation follow the line of demonstrating its incompatibility with the situation existing in the world. While conceding that the struggle for socialism used to develop as Lenin pictured it, some theorists and leaders of the working class movement assert that his theory is now obsolete and out of date since they say it has ceased to fit the new conditions and answer the needs of this struggle. This approach is unsound in two respects. On the one hand it proposes treating Lenin's theory of revolution and the transition to socialism as some kind of frozen code of laws when it is in reality a living, developing theory open to everything new and constantly being enriched by the practice and experience of the class struggle and so always remains at the level of the period's requirements and the demands of our time. On the other hand the flimsiness of this approach is associated with a superficial, subjectivist appraisal of the changes that are taking place in capitalist society and on the world arena. These are treated in isolation from the fundamental contradictions of the modern world, viz. those between the bourgeoisie and the working class, between capitalism and socialism and between imperialism and all the democratic peace forces. Contradictions characteristic of the transition from capitalism to socialism for all epochs on a world scale. Lenin's theory of the revolutionary transformation of society was formed and continues to be developed precisely from an analysis of them so that it has retained its effectiveness and topicality throughout this epoch.

(4) Capitalist and reformist ideologists strive to oppose Lenin's propositions on the transition to socialism to those of Karl Marx on this issue from which Lenin is alleged to have retreated. This is often done moreover under the slogan

Back to Marx¹ as a defence of classical Marxism. The ideologists who do this are the same ones who try as we saw above to demonstrate the obsolescence of Marxism in other contexts and on other pretexts. Is there not a contradiction here? No. The fact is that it is a matter in fact not of Marxian theory but of undisguised open opportunism only masked by Marxist phraseology and quite acceptable to the opponents of scientific socialism. It is a matter of attempts to turn the revolutionary working-class movement back and to switch it to reformist positions quite alien to Marxism. Those who dissociate themselves from Leninism today would push the movement back not to Marx but to Bernstein. That is distinctly shown by their statements in which a reformist opportunist version of Marxism and not real Marxism is in fact opposed to Leninism.

The rise and activity of this trend of anti Leninism is due to the fact that it was Lenin who continued the work of Marx and that Marxism lives in Leninism. Lenin proceeded to develop the views of Marx and Engels on the transition to socialism in a Marxian manner i.e. he was guided by the class interests of the proletariat. His inquiry into these matters was based on the scientific tenets of Marxism not by revising them but by developing them. That does not mean of course that his ideas on the socialist transformation of society did not differ in any way from the views of Marx and Engels. There are differences which is natural because the theory of the transition to socialism is a living theory reflecting the objective revolutionary process and all the changes taking place in it.

No one else defended the basic principles of Marxism and its most important ideas and tenets with such consistency as Lenin. At the same time no one else paid such attention to the need to refine one conclusion or another as the situation changed or displayed such boldness in developing revolutionary theory, strategy and tactics. It was he who insisted that a Marxist must take cognisance of real life of the true facts of *reality* and not cling to a theory of yesterday.¹ From that standpoint he consistently developed revolutionary thought. And the theoretical propositions substantiated by Marx and Engels gave him firm support.

The twentieth century has proved to be incomparably more revolutionary than the nineteenth. And Lenin evaluated the essence of the new period in a truly Marxian manner and reflected its main quality its revolutionariness in his ideas on the transformation of society. Naturally therefore issues of the science and art of revolution and problems of the

¹ V I Lenin On Tactics *Collected Works* Vol 24 p 45

revolutionary transition to socialism were raised and investigated much more often and more concretely in his works than in those of Marx and Engels. If that is revision of Marx then needless to say it is only so from the angle of those who do not like the revolutionary character of our century.

A striving to interpret Lenin's theory of the roads to socialism in the context of a different kind of contradiction, viz. between nationalism and internationalism, theory and method, old and new, etc. is common to all the lines of falsifying it mentioned above. The ideologists of the capitalist class and reformism are very conscious of what immense force this theory has as a whole and also the whole theoretical legacy of Marx, Engels and Lenin. They are therefore constantly looking for inner contradictions in Marxism-Leninism and trying to picture matters as if some of its components are incompatible with others and as if practical realisation of its ideas would very nearly refute these ideas themselves.

The authors of such interpretations avoid talking about its main subject matter and its main conclusions. This subject matter is the general patterns of the revolutionary transition to socialism and the building of socialist society. As for the most important conclusions in regard to them, the whole revolutionary experience of the twentieth century quite confirms their indisputable theoretical correctness. The practice of all victorious socialist revolutions confirms them. They are also confirmed, so to say, by the rule of contraries, i.e. by the defeats revolutionaries have suffered in some cases in the fight for socialism.

In its inseparable integrity, Marxism-Leninism is now a reliable scientific foundation for Communists' further development of the theory of the revolutionary transformation of society in accordance with the needs of living practice. Modern times are posing a host of such problems to solve which it is no use looking for ready-made formulas. Communists must therefore have a creative attitude to the Marxist-Leninist theory of the transition to socialism and constantly develop and supplement it and consider it obligatory as well as natural to look for ways and methods that can lead the working people to socialist society in the conditions of their countries. That fully corresponds to the essence and spirit of Leninism.

Lenin said, quoting Engels, that since socialism had become a science it demands that it be pursued as a science.¹ It is as a scientific theory and not a collection of dogmas that the vanguard forces of today's revolutionary process must see

¹ V. I. Lenin, *What Is To Be Done? Collected Works*, Vol. 5, 1977, p. 372.

Lenin's theory of the transition to socialism. The whole experience of world socialism and of the working-class and national liberation movements has confirmed the international value of this theory whose creative application serves the great cause of the revolutionary renewal of the world.

3 The Communist Movement on the Forms of the Transition to Socialism

The issue of the forms and roads of the transition to socialism has an exceptionally important place in the ideological and creative arsenal of the Communist movement. Many Communist Parties following this theory have made big advances in the fight against capitalism and for a socialist transformation of society. Communists are endeavouring to apply the theory of the transition to socialism creatively to the concrete conditions of their countries and are developing and deepening it from the experience of their work, allowing for the new factors in the development of society. Lenin said of revolutionary theory that it is impossible to dream it up; that it grows from the aggregate of the revolutionary experience and thought of all countries in the world.

One cannot be a socialist, a revolutionary, a Social Democrat without participating in the measure of one's powers in developing and applying that theory.¹

Both the theory of the transition to socialism and the forms of its practical realisation were developed along with development of the international Communist movement. Let us trace concretely how this process took place.

Lenin's theory of the revolutionary transformation of capitalism into socialism became the theoretical basis of the programme and activity of the Communist International. Guided by his ideas the Comintern gave clear answers over a quarter of a century to the fundamental problems facing the working class and mankind in the epoch of the transition from capitalism to socialism: issues of war and peace, of the fight for democracy against fascism, of the development of the national liberation movement, of the roads bringing the masses into the socialist revolution and of the role of victorious socialism in world social advance. Many of the ideas put forward by the Comintern have become a firm part of the arsenal of Marxism-Leninism. The Comintern aided the formation of Communist Parties, armed them with revolutionary theory, acquainted them with the experience of the class

¹ V. I. Lenin, *The Voice of an Honest French Socialist*, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 354.

struggle and taught them a creative understanding of the lessons of the October revolution. The Comintern united Marxism Leninism and the working-class movement.

The enemies of the Communist movement are striving as always to distort and garble the contribution of the Comintern in the world revolutionary process and to defame all its work. In the guise of criticising its mistakes there is still direct revision of the main principles of the Communist movement and of the theory of socialist revolution and the forms of the transition to socialism.

The work of the Comintern was not of course without its deficiencies which were analysed at its congresses so as to overcome them and have been objectively appraised in Marxist Leninist historiography. At the same time as alternate Member of the CC CPSU Politburo B. N. Ponomarev has noted:

The course of events confirmed the correctness of the main principles of the Comintern. Much of what was subsequently achieved by the forces of peace, national liberation and progress had its source in ideas that were put forward and formulated in the years of the Comintern.¹

One can hardly exaggerate the historical legacy of the Comintern and its immense contribution to the theory and practice of the Communist and whole world revolutionary movement to development of the strategy and tactics of the fight for democracy and to overcome nationalism and right and left opportunism in the working-class movement. The Communist International not only consistently defended the work of Marx and Lenin on the transition from capitalism to socialism against opportunists but also took it further in the conditions that built up in the world in the 1920s and 1930s. The Comintern took into account the significance for the revolutionary struggle of the new phenomena caused by the far reaching economic upheavals in capitalist countries, the increased unevenness of capitalism's development, the spread of state monopoly tendencies and the rise of fascism. On the other hand attention was concentrated when developing issues of the transition to socialism on such very important factors as the successful building of socialism in the Soviet Union, the growth of its influence on social processes in the capitalist world and the creation of an anti fascist front in a number of countries. Such outstanding theorists and leaders of the international working-class and Communist movements closely associated with the work of the Comintern as Georgi

¹ B. N. Ponomarev. To the 60th Anniversary of the Formation of the Communist International. *Kommunist* 1979 5 24 (in Russian).

Dimitrov Harry Pollitt Antonio Gramsci Palmiro Togliatti, Maurice Thorez Klement Gottwald Victorio Codovilla Sen Katayama and Wilhelm Pieck also made a big contribution to the development of the Marxist Leninist theory of the revolutionary transformation of society

The Comintern generalised the practice of the struggle of the separate parties for democracy and socialism and the experience of the working people's class battles throughout the world developing Lenin's theory of the socialist transformation of society

As the Communist Parties became consolidated the tasks facing them grew and became more complex their solution called for greater tactical flexibility than in earlier years and greater allowance for the specific national features of the struggle The development of events showed that the organisational form of the workers' association elected by the First Congress of the Communist International which answered the needs of the initial period of the revival of the working-class movement became more and more obsolescent as the movement grew and complicated its tasks in separate countries and even became a hindrance to further consolidation of the national workers' parties

Communists' rejection of a form of unity of the world Communist movement that had ceased to correspond to the conditions of the struggle encouraged activation of the work of each party in all spheres of activity theory included In developing problems of the transition to socialism Communists took into account the new more favourable opportunities for dealing with them that opened up after World War II A world socialist system came into being The balance of power in the world was radically altered Capitalism entered a new stage of general crisis The colonial system of imperialism began to break up

In endeavouring to make the most of the favourable conditions created by growth of the might of socialism and the upsurge of the democratic movement the Communist Parties of several countries in Europe concluded that it was possible to orient themselves on a gradual winning of power during a long struggle jointly with the democratic forces of society and on peaceful development of the revolution The Communist Parties of France Great Britain Italy and other countries put forward precisely such programmes The activity of Communists based on new strategic and tactical principles fostered the development of broad anti monopoly democratic movements objectively opposed to the principles and foundations of capitalist society and led to more flexible effective application of the general logic of the transformation of society in the specific national conditions

Communists have made advances pursuing a policy based on these principles. By taking advantage of the favourable conditions created they have developed the struggle to democratise public affairs, consolidated broad alliances with other progressive forces of society and been actively involved in the work of democratic public bodies and authorities. In 18 countries including France, Italy, Finland, Denmark and Norway, Communists have formed part of the government.

Imperialism, feeling a real threat to its domination, developed a broad counter-offensive against the revolutionary movement. It launched the cold war, a period of frenzied anti-communism and economic and political pressure on the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies. In several countries, for example Greece, Indonesia and Vietnam, imperialism resorted to armed force in order to suppress the revolutionary movement. In 1949 the United States and its allies set up the aggressive North Atlantic bloc. As a result, the imperialists succeeded in blocking the revolutionary and democratic forces and driving them back a little.

By the middle of the 1950s, however, the bankruptcy of the imperialist policy of suppressing the revolutionary movement and of liberating the People's Democracies from communism and restoring capitalism in them was becoming clear. Socialism was not only defending its positions but was also forcing imperialism to accept conditions of struggle favourable for the revolutionary forces. This period taught Communist Parties a great deal and indicated the main trends in the strategy of imperialism and the capacity and possibilities of Communists' allies in the fight for socialism.

In the mid 1950s several Communist Parties renewed the theses of their programmes on the transition to socialism, drawing on the experience gathered in the fight against imperialism. This marked a new historical point in development of the strategy and tactics of the world Communist movement, made a substantial contribution to the theory of the socialist revolution and indicated more effective roads of struggle for democracy and socialism. As fraternal parties noted the resolutions of the 20th Congress of the CPSU (1956) which stressed the need for a creative development of Marxist-Leninist theory, played a historic role in this.

The international conferences of Communist and Workers' Parties of 1957, 1960 and 1969, which gave fresh impetus to creative development of the Marxist-Leninist theory of the socialist revolution, were of enormous theoretical and practical significance as regards the transition to socialism. When defining the character of the present period, the conferences began with an analysis of the immense changes taking place in

the world and the new balance of power caused by the strengthening of socialism and weakening of imperialism

In generalising the experience of the world Communist and workers movement these conferences pointed out that the fight of the working class in capitalist countries could take various forms armed and unarmed Attention was drawn to the point that peaceful coexistence of countries with different social systems created auspicious conditions for using peaceful forms of struggle for the socialist transformation of society and also to the importance of making use of the traditional democratic institutions of capitalist society including parliament in this struggle

From their analysis of the issues and problems of the national liberation movement the conferences stressed that this movement was now directed against capitalism within the newly liberated countries themselves as well as against world imperialism The prospect of non capitalist road of development for newly emancipated countries which is a form of transition to a socialist system has become more real because of the support of world socialism

While noting that each Communist Party independently works out the road to socialism and the forms of the transition in accordance with its national conditions and specific features the conferences pointed out at the same time that there needs to be a resolute struggle against nationalist distortions of revolutionary theory that hamper development of the Communist movement and the fight for a revolutionary transformation of society

These conclusions and the others drawn by Communists international meetings reflected both the results of the major work that parties have done to improve and perfect the Marxist Leninist theory of the forms of transition to socialism and the practical experience of the working class During the creative discussions a well argued critique was made of attempts to distort this theory in an opportunist fashion Outbursts of opportunism it was noted are linked with a mistaken appraisal and evaluation of the new phenomena in the development of modern capitalism and in the tactics of imperialism In addition to employing repression against the revolutionary forces imperialism is more and more resorting to social and political manoeuvring so as to maintain and consolidate its influence A stick-and-carrot tactic on the one hand evokes distrust in their own powers and fear of repression among part of the working people while it generates hopes on the other hand that stable prosperity is possible under capitalism In that situation Social Democratic illusions and belief in an evolutionary road to socialism got a new stimulus

Attempts to revise the main tenets of the Marxist Leninist theory of socialist revolution as incompatible with the new conditions of social development were rebuffed at these conferences. Communists need not say or deny that new elements have arisen in the socio-economic and political structures of capitalism over these last decades under the deepening general crisis of capitalism, intensification of the class struggle and evolution of the scientific and technological revolution. There is much that is new in the world development and struggle of the two opposing social systems, but none of that alters the essence of capitalism or eliminates its inherent contradictions.

Imperialism is still the enemy of progress, democracy and socialism and is still striving to suppress the struggle of nations for social and national emancipation. Furthermore, as events at the beginning of the 1980s have shown, imperialist circles have by no means abandoned aggressive attempts to win back lost positions and alter the balance of forces in the world in their favour by way of military pressure on socialism – and stepping up international tension which provides favourable opportunities for activating reaction in capitalist countries. All that, of course, has its effect on Communists' development of their forms and means of fighting for socialism.

Communist Parties are continuing actively to develop Marxist Leninist ideas of the roads to socialism. And this is only natural. The 26th Congress of the CPSU noted that these roads are peculiar to each country. As Leonid Brezhnev stressed:

in none of the now existing socialist countries have the forms, methods and ways of the socialist revolution been a mechanical repetition of outside experience.¹

Only constant care, consequently, to apply the general propositions of revolutionary theory creatively to local conditions and to work out forms of struggle consonant with them can provide the preconditions for victory of the revolution. What are the main trends of this work?

(1) Communist Parties are enriching old ways and forms of uniting the fight for democracy and the struggle for socialism and are working out new ones. The programmes adopted by a number of Communist and Workers' Parties consider consistent extension of democracy to be the fundamental form of advance to socialism.

¹ L. I. Brezhnev, *Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU to the XXVI Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Immediate Tasks of the Party in Home and Foreign Policy* (Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow, 1981), p. 23.

At the same time Communist Parties are stressing the differences between the reformist and revolutionary approaches to understanding the peaceful road of socialist revolution. In fighting reformist right-opportunist interpretations of this road that reduce it to a parliamentary path, Marxist Leninists point out that society will undergo far reaching qualitative changes during a peaceful transition to socialism and that whatever the roads and forms of the passage from capitalism to socialism, there will be sudden revolutionary changes, alterations in the character of ownership of the means of production and exchange and a passing of political power from the capitalist class to the working class and its allies.

(2) Ideas on the transition to socialism are developing along the line of concretising the ways and forms of socialist reforms and of bringing the objectives of the struggle closer to the pressing needs and requirements of the working people, which is associated with Communist Parties striving to enhance their political weight that is already having a direct bearing on the direction and administration of public and national affairs.

Communist Parties also endeavour to link the solution of concrete economic and socio-political issues with the general objectives of the struggle and a socialist perspective.

(3) When analysing issues of the transition to socialism, Communist Parties are paying more and more attention to developing the line of forming social alliances of the working class and other strata of society oppressed by monopoly capitalism and to searching for active forms of political cooperation with various organisations of the working people and parties of the left democratic wing. They are striving moreover to further this in every way so as to build blocs that are not one-day affairs arranged for the next elections or formed for the sake of some concrete political action or campaign. They consider the policy of a united front as a long term strategy and not a tactical manoeuvre. Its aim is to achieve effective joint action of all left forces in the fight against capital for a consistent democratic reform of society that would provide auspicious conditions for the struggle for socialism.

Communists define the stages or steps of social reforms in accordance with this strategy. The Programme of the German Communist Party, for instance, defines the beginning of the transition from capitalism to socialism in West Germany as a stage of anti-monopoly democracy. Its Programme says:

By an anti-monopolist democracy the GCP means a period of fundamental reforms during which the work

ing class and other democratic forces will have such political strength and parliamentary influence that they will be able to form a coalition government representing their common interests. This government taking the experience of history into consideration and basing itself on the democratic mandate of the people will rid the army police courts and administrative machine and also the mass media of the influence of neonazi and militarist forces and will block misuse of the public authorities against the people and the constitutional government¹

In working for unity of all anti monopolist democratic forces Marxist Leninists are struggling not just for a coalition in general but for a common front with a definite orientation that will not on the one hand contradict the party's principles and not limit its independence but will on the other hand play the role of an organising principle and not allow the alliance to be converted into an amorphous association innocuous to the class enemy. Marxist Leninist parties are acquiring proficiency in practice in the complex dialectic that requires them on the one hand to be spokesmen of the general interests of the majority of the people and correspondingly to develop co-operation with other political forces and on the other hand to preserve their independence in the fight for socialism. This combination of the party's independent line and its policy of alliances of principle is the key (as Marxist Leninists see it) to the working class's effective realisation of its vanguard role in the process of democratic reforms leading to socialism.

Such are the most pressing directions being pursued by Communist Parties today in order to cope with issues associated with the roads to socialism and forms of fighting for it. These directions which are typical on the whole of Communists' theoretical work in this field in the concrete conditions of the different countries have their own special features. For instance all the parties closely link the opportunities for advance to socialism with the fight for democracy. Some of them however are primarily oriented on unarmed forms of struggle others leave it open whether to realise the transition to socialism by a peaceful road or by armed struggle. The programme of the Communist Party USA for example says

There can be no doubt therefore as to the inherently democratic character of socialist revolution. The question remains however whether the democratic will of

¹ *Unsere Zeit* 25 October 1978 p 19

the people can be brought to expression by relatively peaceful means that is without armed insurrection without civil war Of course we advocate social change by peaceful means through political institutions and people's organisations within the American Constitutional framework But the people's democratic will our advocacy and the democratic institutions of our country are not the sole historical factors that will determine the path of social change in the United States

There is also monopoly power and the question of how it will be exercised

No ruling class relinquishes power passively and voluntarily ¹

That is why it also notes that it is not possible to answer what form—peaceful or violent—the socialist revolution will take in the United States

We believe however that a peaceful path to socialism is a possible alternative This is not to say that the transition will be free of all violence ²

The planks of the programmes of Communist and Workers Parties on the issues of the transition to socialism are by no means fixed unvarying schemes They change and are amended in accordance with the concrete political situation building up in their countries

In defining the roads to socialism and the forms of struggle for social reforms Communists allow for the national peculiarities and level of development of capitalism in their countries its place in the system of international division of labour and so on The aggregate of these factors and others differ in various regions which is naturally reflected in Communist Parties approach to the issues of the struggle for a socialist transformation of society

In Latin America for instance capitalism has more or less become the dominant economic system At the same time mainly because of continuing dependence on US imperialism the influence of pre capitalist relations is strong there which puts its mark on the whole process of the social development of the countries of that region In these conditions the Communist Parties of Latin America and the Caribbean point out the peoples there cannot make sweeping socio economic changes let alone achieve socialism without abolishing the oppression of each of their countries by American imperial

¹ *New Program of the Communist Party USA* (New Outlook Publishers New York 1970) p 92

² *Ibid*, p 93

ism and without putting an end to the domination of international corporations

The fight for democracy for the masses of the people and the struggle for pressing structural reforms and passage to socialism are inseparable from the fight against monopolies and imperialism which not only have these countries in their grip but also prop up and aid their oligarchies and oligarchic governments

Acquaintance with the programmes of the Communist Parties of Latin America shows that the Communists of that region who are creatively grasping and understanding the principles of the Marxist Leninist theory of the forms of revolutionary struggle have a concrete plan of action to develop a broad mass movement for genuine national emancipation which is becoming more and more interwoven with the fight for social reforms and transition to the stage of the maturing and realisation of socialist revolution. They assume moreover that socialism will only be won in all the countries of this region through persistent stubborn struggle and radical reforms through the direct experience of the masses and through the abolition of imperialist oppression and domination by international corporations and removal from power of ruling classes allied with imperialism. They are therefore seeking without losing sight of the final goals of the struggle to apply the roads to revolution directly in the conditions of their countries and to lead the masses along them putting forward interim slogans in that connection of - fight for democracy for the masses of the people and the implementation of a genuinely anti-imperialist policy in defence of natural resources and for urgent structural reforms

In Latin American countries where bourgeois-democratic governments are in office Communist Parties link the outlook for the transition to socialism predominantly with peaceful method of struggle with achieving unity of the democratic and revolutionary forces with growth of the masses political consciousness state of organisation and fighting capacity (primarily that of the working class) and with the forming of people's governments

Several parties in particular those working where dictatorial regimes are in power see the only possible road to democracy and socialism in their countries in armed struggle. The resolutions of the 7th Congress of the Salvadorian Communist Party (1979) for instance said that the main form of the armed path of revolution in El Salvador must be one of armed insurrection. It did not reject other forms of armed struggle but proposed combining and co-ordinating them with insurrection, and also suggested combination and co-

ordination of insurrection with a variety of unarmed actions of the working people and the popular masses in general

The tactics of armed struggle led to victory of the revolutionary forces in Nicaragua where the dictatorial Somoza regime was overthrown in 1979. Victory was won through stubborn sanguineous struggle under the leadership of the Sandinista National Liberation Front around which all the revolutionary and progressive forces of the country rallied. The Communists of Nicaragua are aware that the success of the anti imperialist anti-oligarchic revolution is only creating the conditions for the country's passage to socialism which they see as a more or less lengthy process. On that assumption they pose the direct tasks of the present stage as consolidation of the people's gains securing of economic independence the carrying out of sweeping socio-economic reforms in the interests of the broad masses and development of the working people's revolutionary consciousness. Communists the General Secretary of the Nicaraguan Socialist Party Alvaro Ramirez says explicitly declaring its support for the line of the ruling Sandino Front will now do

their best to direct the people's efforts towards accomplishing the more pressing tasks consolidating and defending the revolutionary power developing it qualitatively advancing the economy and improving the people's standard of living¹

The course of social development taking place in developing countries convincingly confirms the correctness of Lenin's theoretical prediction that the movement of the majority of the population of the globe will turn against capitalism and imperialism². The capitalist stage of development he noted was by no means obligatory for the peoples of backward countries

If the victorious revolutionary proletariat conducts systematic propaganda among them and the Soviet governments come to their aid with all the means at their disposal—in that event it will be mistaken to assume that the backward peoples must inevitably go through the capitalist stage of development³

Furthermore he said

¹ Alvaro Ramirez Nicaragua from Armed Struggle to Construction *World Marxist Review* 1980 23 1 93

² V I Lenin Third Congress of the Communist International *Collected Works*, Vol 32 p 482

³ V I Lenin The Second Congress of the Communist International July 19-August 7 1920 *Collected Works*, Vol 31 p 244

with the aid of the proletariat of the advanced countries backward countries can go over to the Soviet system and through certain stages of development to communism without having to pass through the capitalist stage¹

The experience of the transition to socialism of such extremely different countries (as regards their conditions of social development) as Mongolia Vietnam and Cuba has confirmed Lenin's idea beyond dispute. The Communist movement is constantly improving the forms and modes of applying this idea with due regard for this experience (and also the experience of other countries developing along a non-capitalist road). Let us compare how Marxist Leninist thought treated these problems in the 1960s when they first became of broad international importance and how it approaches them today in the early 1980s.

Then 15 or 20 years ago the non-capitalist road was pictured as the highroad of newly emancipated peoples and the capitalist road as simply a temporary exception to the rule. The following variants of this path were distinguished on the socio-political plane:

(1) the revolutionary democratic road on which the driving force was revolutionary democrats who later adopted the stand of Marxism-Leninism as happened in Cuba. It was envisaged furthermore that national capital though limited would be retained although it would not play an active political role (this was considered the main road for many countries in Asia and Africa where a national capitalist class had not yet taken shape).

(2) the national-democratic road which posited the creation of a broad left-wing democratic coalition that would include the national capitalist class. The coalition would elect to take a non-capitalist road as the least of evils compared with subordination to international capital or growing local monopolies (such a path was envisaged in particular in the programme of the Communist Party of India).

(3) finally the road to socialism under the leadership of a Marxist-Leninist party of which the Vietnamese people were a successful example but in those years this example seemed to many to be the exception rather than the rule.

Life and practical experience of the class struggle forced substantial amendments to be made both to the general assessment of the possibilities of newly emancipated countries taking a non-capitalist road and to the variants of this road noted above.

¹ *Ibid*

(1) Now many years later it has become clear to Communists that certain newly emancipated countries in Asia and Africa are not ready to take the road of a socialist orientation. Why? The external factor is decisive i.e. their economic dependence on imperialism and their involvement in the world capitalist market. This factor incidentally still weighs on countries that have chosen a socialist orientation. Another important circumstance is the development of a national capitalist class stimulated by international capital and laying claim to a monopoly of power.

Taking all that into account the Communist Parties of developing countries are paying more and more attention today to issues of the class struggle that used to be masked by problems of national liberation. The Statement of the Communist and Workers Parties of the Arab Countries (1978) for example stressed that

the present stage of the Arab national liberation movement is essentially a stage of national democratic revolution which is proceeding in new circumstances in which the objectives of national liberation and social progress converge and their solution is becoming increasingly vital and complex in view of the aggravation of the class struggle.¹

The need for a close tie up of the tasks of the national liberation and anti-imperialist struggle and those of social progress and sweeping social reforms has also been pointed out by the Communists of Africa. The delegates at the Meeting of several Communist and Workers Parties of Africa (1978) stressed

The peoples that have won political independence are intensifying their efforts to consolidate it and to achieve economic independence. Life and the logic of the liberation struggle are repeatedly demonstrating that these objectives are closely related to the struggle for social liberation.²

(2) The fact that the national democratic variant of non-capitalist development has not actually been realised everywhere has found reflection in the political orientation of several Communist Parties of developing countries. The reason is that national capital is not willing to take part in

¹ Against Imperialism, Zionism and Reaction *Information Bulletin*, 1978 16 12 9 10

² For the Freedom, Independence, National Revival and Social Progress of the Peoples of Tropical and Southern Africa *Information Bulletin*, 1978 16 16/17 14

such a development or directly prevents it or is counting on wrecking it or is fusing with the state machinery and encouraging the formation of a bureaucratic bourgeoisie. In the political field this is expressed in a lack of interest by the national democratic circles of the capitalist class in forming a common front with Communists on terms that would be acceptable to the Communist Parties. Analysing the development of events in Egypt for example after the proimperialist regime has been overthrown Communists concluded that it was necessary so that the democratic struggle could grow into a fight against capitalism to give a decisive rebuff to internal reaction to develop broad democracy for the working masses and to have a vanguard party expressing the interests of the working class and that the interweaving of the national and social revolutions did not in itself yet guarantee consistent development of the revolutionary process and did not rule out regression.

The changes in the political line of the Communist Party of India which announced its rejection of a coalition with any capitalist party at its 11th Congress in 1978 are indicative in this respect. Indian Communists see the way out of the situation in which India finds itself in rejection of the capitalist path of development and going over to a firm anti imperialist anti monopolist and anti feudal road. They pointed out that this could only happen if all the left and democratic forces united closed ranks and offered the people their alternative. The mounting of an offensive of these forces against the forces of reaction could in their view help the working class to break the capitalist monopoly of power and replace it by a government of left unity.

Such a government will be a potent instrument for carrying forward the struggle against imperialism monopoly capital and feudalism to a new decisive stage and for radical socio-economic transformations.¹

Communist Parties in countries with a formed national capitalist class now see creation of the preconditions for the transition to socialist reforms as a complex multilevel process taking several successive stages. In several newly emancipated Afro-Asian countries this process has taken on a specific character that it was difficult to predict when they had just set out on the road of independence. The point is the direct intervention of the army in political affairs. This is an ambiguous factor. In some countries the military having seized power are encouraging sweeping social reforms with a

¹ Political Resolution adopted by the XI Congress of the CPI Bhatinda March 31 April 7 1978 New Age, 23 April 1978 Supplement p 18

socialist orientation while in others on the contrary they pursue a reactionary pro imperialist line and in other countries still they are trying to imitate the classical model of capitalist politics. It all depends on what social and political forces they represent and on what strata of society they are based on. Communist Parties in developing countries with a military regime choose their tactics in accordance with that.

The Communist Party of Indonesia for instance operating deep underground puts forward a programme of struggle for a democratic national government representing the interests of the workers peasants artisans civil servants soldiers national entrepreneurs the youth and other democratic circles. Its appeal to the Indonesian people of 1978 said that only a government based on a National Unity Front would

be able to implement the social reforms long overdue provide the population with food clothes land and jobs restore the civil and political rights of the people lead the country out of the crisis¹

The Indonesian Communists believe that these tasks are simultaneously the main political slogans at the present stage of the movement against the regime. The Sudanese Communist Party which is also persecuted by the military authorities has called as a priority task for the founding of a front for democracy and national salvation a front that would unite parties organisations political currents the intelligentsia and patriotically minded people striving to continue the fight for democracy national sovereignty and social progress.

Specific problems arise during a survey of the outlook for the transition to socialism in countries where religion has become an active factor in social and political processes. Religion as the events in Iran have shown—in this case Islam—can become the banner of a people's anti imperialist revolution. In such a situation Communists try while consistently acting as the party of the working class to co-operate with all the revolutionary democratic forces so that the working people will really reap the fruits of the revolution and so that the capitalist class and reaction will be unable to exploit the religious enthusiasm of the masses in order to consolidate their positions. Iranian Communists working in a situation of a bitter struggle of revolutionary and reactionary forces take it as their point of departure

that for a relatively long time to come Iran will continue developing along the lines of revolutionary-democratic renewal which will assure its political and economic

¹ *Tekad Rakyat*, 1978 7 1 4

independence and pave the way for radical reforms in the working people's interests¹

(3) Communists have come to the conclusion in analysing the experience of the past ten or fifteen years that a more considered differentiated approach is needed to appraisal of the possibilities and capability of revolutionary democrats to take developing countries along a non-capitalist road. The regimes of a revolutionary-democratic character established in several countries in the 1960s limited themselves to compromise reforms that did not undermine the foundations of capitalism in them. In some of these countries a bureaucratic bourgeoisie has arisen through enrichment of the top people. In some of these countries Communists and trade unions have been persecuted and the rights of the working class restricted. The Communists of Iraq for instance who stand for the carrying out in alliance with all progressive forces of democratic reforms that would open the road to socialism have pointed out such phenomena in their country.

In striving for co-operation with revolutionary democrats Communists are working to ensure that this co-operation will really serve the cause of social progress. Communist Parties are therefore paying more and more attention to the social and economic consequences of the policy of revolutionary democratic governments considering that it is by them and not political slogans that the results of a socialist orientation of development must be judged. The analysis of the economic situation in Syria for instance made by the Communist Party of Syria showed that the capitalist class had been able to adapt itself to the process of revolutionary-democratic reforms and that capitalism had acquired such strength that it was able to hold back the country's development in a progressive direction.

Marxist Leninists while critically analysing negative elements in the policy of revolutionary democrats at the same time consider that revolutionary democracy continues to be a decisive force in developing countries capable of ensuring a socialist orientation of development. Experience however indicates that this role is only played consistently and effectively when it is accompanied by revolutionary democrats going over to the position of scientific socialism. In the past that was demonstrated as we have already remarked by the Cuban experience and at present by the development of the revolution in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen. It was the founding of a vanguard party in 1978 the Yemeni Socialist Party based on the principles of scientific socialism.

¹ Ali Khavari, 'The Anti Imperialist Tide in Iran', *World Marxist Review* 1980, 23, 4, 65.

and resolutely following a road of socialist development that was the crucial event in democratic Yemen's development along a path of building a new life and was the guarantee of its future success in developing the country's economy and raising the standard of living of the working masses

(4) The evolution of the revolutionary process in recent years has provided indisputable new evidence that optimum possibilities of newly emancipated countries taking the road of socialist transformations are guaranteed by leadership by a Marxist Leninist party or organisation. Whereas only the people of Vietnam used to have such a leadership now the peoples of Laos and Afghanistan are moving along such a road¹. Experience has shown furthermore that in those countries where there is no Marxist Leninist party but where the anti imperialist anti feudal struggle is headed by organisations close to it in ideology the line of a socialist orientation becomes the decisive factor in social reform after victory of the national revolution. Such countries are Angola Mozambique Ethiopia and Benin in which vanguard parties have been founded guided by the ideas of scientific socialism. The programme of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) or Labour Party adopted at its first congress in 1977 noted for example that the MPLA as a party of the working class was fighting to build socialism in Angola and to establish a society with a juster social system a classless society with an independent planned economy and the broadest democracy a society that would ensure real satisfaction of the people's needs. The programme stressed moreover that

in order to achieve these objectives we have to go through various stages. Angola is now at the stage of People's Democratic Revolution during which all the political and material conditions will be created to pass to the next stage to the Socialist Revolution².

These countries' successful experience of advancing along the road of socialist development gives us full grounds for concluding that the Marxist Leninist theory of the transition to socialism is applicable as well in countries where a strong working class has not yet been formed and where feudal tribal and clan and religious traditions persist. Babrak Karmal General Secretary of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan Chairman of the Revolutionary Council and Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan has remarked

¹ This point is specially considered in the chapters that follow

² Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola *Estatutos e Programa* (Luanda 1978) p 41

At the same time considering the general uniformities of revolutions including national democratic revolutions we are absolutely sure that the forces loyal to the ideology of the working class can carry out such a revolution even in a country where the working class is not strong enough. But for that I repeat the national tribal and religious traditions and the people's immediate demands must be taken scrupulously into account¹

(5) The practical experience of a socialist orientation of development has confirmed Communists' conclusion based on Lenin's conception of the non-capitalist road that the most important condition for the advance of newly free countries along the road of social progress is their close alliance with countries of the socialist community. This alliance guarantees freedom of choice of the paths of social development, protects progressive regimes against imperialist aggressors and enables them to achieve economic independence from international capital.

From the standpoint of Marxist Leninists there is no real social freedom and cannot be without emancipation of labour from the yoke of capital, hence their conviction that it is socialism that meets the fundamental interests of the masses of the people of developing countries. Communists, however, take a firm stand that choice of the road of social development is the domestic affair of the people. *A sine qua non* of really free choice, however, is maximum limitation and ultimately complete exclusion of the possibility of intervention by external reaction, imperialism. Can such a precondition be guaranteed without an alliance with the countries of the socialist community? The answer that life gives is No, it cannot. That is why Marxist Leninist parties consistently link the objectives of newly liberated countries' passage to a non-capitalist road of development with those of consolidating their alliance with the world of socialism. Realisation of these objectives has acquired special urgency today in connection with imperialism's increasing attempts to block the processes of a revolutionary reform of society in Mozambique, Angola and other countries.

Thus we see that over the years since the first emancipated countries announced their choice of a non-capitalist road of development, the content of the problem of the passage to this path and the forms and means of dealing with them have not been either identical or easy. They have undergone certain changes but at the same time have been essentially

¹ Babrak Karmal: The Afghan People Will Stand Firmly on Guard of the Revolution. *World Marxist Review* 1980, 23, 4, 51.

enriched and confidence in their correctness has become stronger and stronger. Accordingly the Communist movement's approach to them too has altered faithfully to its tradition of tying theory and practice up closely and realistically appraising the possibilities of any country's passing to socialism. It has put forward new objectives for the revolutionary transformation of society boldly and with scientific thoroughness.

By creatively applying the universal truths of Marxist-Leninist theory in the concrete conditions of various countries and regions Communists are laying the road to the socialist morrow and seeking ways and forms of leading the working masses along it. In that connection we must note that differences in the posing or the tackling of any one concrete problem of social reform cannot help arising sometimes among fraternal parties working in such varied diverse conditions. It is important only as Marxist-Leninists stress to approach these matters from a principled class position and not to lose the socialist perspective for the sake of temporary tactical gains. As Leonid Brezhnev said in his report to the 26th Congress of the CPSU:

As our Party sees it differences of opinion between Communists can be overcome unless of course they are fundamental differences between revolutionaries and reformists between creative Marxism and dogmatic sectarianism or ultra-left adventurism. In that case of course there can be no compromises—today just as in Lenin's lifetime.¹

Any yielding to opportunism however slight and unsubstantial it may seem at first glance ultimately puts serious obstacles in the way of the main goal that Communists set themselves i.e. in the way of taking their countries from capitalism to socialism. That is why Marxist-Leninists when analysing the forms of the transformation of society and developing a creative search for new methods of struggle for socialism are consistently guided by the principles that were substantiated by Marx, Engels and Lenin and that express the essence of our revolutionary epoch.

Conclusions

A dynamic process of world transition from capitalism to socialism is developing before our very eyes. It is organised and led by the most influential political force of modern

¹ L. I. Brezhnev *Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU to the XXVI Congress* p. 24

times the international Communist movement. The fraternal parties highly esteem this lofty role won in grim struggle against the class enemies of the proletariat and working people and against the people's oppressors. Marxist Leninists never forget that strict observance of fundamental principles in the fight for the national and social emancipation of humanity and the building of the new society is an indispensable condition *a sine qua non* of their mounting impact on the life of the whole world.

The historic victory of the working class and of socialism could not have been achieved if the strategy of the Communists who headed the world revolutionary process had not been founded on the consistent scientific conclusions of Marxism-Leninism.

The Marxist-Leninist theory of the forms of the transition to socialism has now existed for many decades. The progress of the world Communist movement and all the processes of the contemporary world convincingly demonstrate its correctness. The strength of this theory is that it reflects the fundamental radical processes of social development. Its founders treated the theory of socialist revolution as an integral part of their theory of society. The tenets of this theory retain their value and significance independently of the conditions of different countries and of the time that separates us from the onset of its development. The new ideas that have been introduced into the theory of the forms of the transition to socialism by the Communist movement only confirm the firmness and solidity of the basic principles of the theory of revolution developed by Marx, Engels and Lenin.

The most profound scientific substantiation cannot need less to say provide a full guarantee against separate miscalculations and blunders in revolutionary practice and cannot rule out the probability of temporary defeats in the struggle. But in the opposite case, i.e. when firmly established scientific truths are forgotten or sacrificed to current passing political considerations, grave consequences are not only probable but inevitable for the revolutionary movement. In that sense fidelity to the substance of Marxist-Leninist theory is an effective guarantee of victorious development of the revolutionary struggle.

- The creative, truly scientific character of this theory makes it universal and enables it to remain a reliable weapon of the revolutionary forces in the future. Communist Parties will undoubtedly cope successfully with the issues that life will face them with. That is the great strength of the Communist movement armed with Marxist-Leninist theory.

Chapter II

THE ESSENCE AND SUBSTANCE OF OUR EPOCH

The principal social processes determining the substance of our times are the following: the sharp turn in world social development caused by the rise of a new social system and the profound and varied changes in the life of mankind associated with it; the marked change in the political map of the world and the founding of socialist states; the birth of scores of independent countries through the break up of imperialism's colonial system; the quantitative and qualitative growth of class battles in capitalist countries; active involvement of the masses of the working people in public and political activity and the struggle for lasting peace and the tackling of other global problems in the interests of the people; and the scientific and technological revolution. These processes are continuing to grow, quickening the progress of mankind. As Leonid Brezhnev noted in his report to the 26th Congress of the CPSU, the revolutionary struggle of the peoples has seen new victories.

The sphere of imperialist domination has narrowed. The internal contradictions in capitalist countries and the rivalry between them have grown more acute.¹

Communists are attentively studying these trends and the content and driving forces of our time; otherwise they cannot work out an effective strategy and tactics for their struggle.

It is not easy to give a scientific answer to the question of what is the essence and character of the times we are living in. The answer calls for deep penetration into the content of the principal patterns determining the socio-political, economic, spiritual and other processes of our day. In other words, the character of our age is a complex and multifaceted matter that expresses the dialectical interaction of the

¹ L. I. Brezhnev, *Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU to the 26th Congress*, p. 6.

economic social political military and ideological trends of an unusually hectic period of history

A correct definition of the age enables us on the one hand to understand the complexity and variety of all the processes of public affairs and serves as Lenin put it as the foundation for an understanding of the specific features of one country or another¹ On the other hand it helps work out an effective strategy and tactics for the masses struggle and to realise the programme aims of the struggle with the minimum effort

In our times when the Communist and Workers Parties of socialist countries are coping in theory and practice with ever bigger tasks of the next stages in the building of the new society and the activity of Communists has become a decisive factor in socio-political affairs in many capitalist countries and is having a mounting impact on the policy of the progressive forces in developing countries a proper understanding of the essence of our times and the conclusions stemming from it help them to comprehend the destinies of mankind are the foundation for analysing such a key issue of today as the forms of the transition to socialism arm the masses of the people with a clear perspective and inspire them to fight for a democratic socialist transformation of society

It is also necessary to deal with the character of our age because a sharp theoretical struggle is going on around it the ideological opponents of Marxism Leninism are resorting to various tricks and devices to hide or distort the true character of the key problems of today Instead of a scientific class analysis they go in for scholastic exercises with arbitrarily selected often secondary criteria trying to twist the meaning of the main trends of the day rehabilitate capitalism and prove its social stability

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union and other Marxist Leninist Parties consider it necessary to keep the issue of the essence and patterns of development of our age constantly at the centre of attention The planks of the programmes of Communist Parties are based on an analysis of this matter A scientific definition of our age that indicates the main trends of development of human society and the alignment of class forces on the world arena is the fraternal parties starting point for working out their strategy and tactics

The development of the whole range of matters relating to clarification of the essence and character of our age undoubtedly calls for the close constant attention of Marxist

¹ V I Lenin Under a False Flag *Collected Works*, Vol 21 p 145

research workers—historians and philosophers economists lawyers specialists in international relations and others but one cannot find much work on this theme in the theoretical literature There are also cases of muddle in defining the essence and basic contradictions of the age and even in the theoretical constructs of the concept age itself Because of that I think it necessary to dwell specially on clarifying the essence and character of our age and to express my own attitude on certain disputed matters connected with the theme of my book

1 Socio-Economic Formations and Historical Ages

The evolution of society has been a complicated historical process the fundamental basis of which is material production (which ultimately determines all aspects of human life) and the character and forms of the relations between people But as humankind has progressed this process has steadily quickened above all because of the mounting role of men's conscious activity in it As Engels wrote in 1893

It took nature millions of years to bring forth conscious creatures and then these conscious creatures thousands of years to act consciously together conscious not only of their actions as individuals but also of their actions as a mass acting together and pursuing a common goal jointly set in advance ¹

Now we have almost attained it he added

By analysing the history of humanity the processes of social change the class struggle and revolutionary changes in the affairs of nations Marx and Engels established that the combination of the various aspects of a society's activity was not accidental but governed by definite laws and patterns Every society at any historical stage is an integral socio-economic organism with economic political and ideological relations characteristic for it As Lenin remarked

the analysis of material social relations at once made it possible to observe recurrence and regularity and to generalise the systems of the various countries in the single fundamental concept social formation It was this generalisation alone that made it possible to proceed from the description of social phenomena (and their evaluation from the standpoint of an ideal) to their

¹ Frederick Engels Letter to G W Lamplugh In Karl Marx/Friedrich Engels. *Werke*, Bd 39 (Dietz Verlag Berlin, 1968) S 63

strictly scientific analysis which isolates let us say by way of example that which distinguishes one capitalist country from another and investigates that which is common to all of them¹

The concept socio-economic formation more or less reflects the gradual evolution of human society. A new formation arises from changes within the preceding one. The change from one formation to another is not an evolutionary process but a revolutionary one: a deep qualitative shift in social development, a new level in the historical progress of humanity.

The main attribute of each socio-economic formation is the mode of production, which is characterised by unity of the productive forces and the relations of production corresponding to them. The character of the relations of production, which constitute the economic structure of society, its basis on which a juridical and political superstructure arises and for which there are definite corresponding forms of social consciousness, depends on the level of development of the productive forces.

Qualitative changes in the mode of production established by a lengthy historical process that embraces various countries and regions at various times and develops in them at varying rates of intensity are the decisive precondition of the forming of any socio-economic formation. Since the completion of the primitive communal age, world history has not known a period when only one socio-economic formation existed on our planet. At present, for example, in addition to capitalism and socialism (the first phase of the communist formation), there are pre-capitalist forms of social system and many transitional forms. Each formation moreover goes through certain stages of development: viz. an elementary stage, a formative stage, maturity, and so on.

The Marxist-Leninist conception of the character of a socio-economic formation's pattern of development provides a scientific definition of the essence of a historical age or epoch. How does Marxism-Leninism define the content and boundaries of historical ages? For our purposes, let us turn to the methodology of Lenin's definition of the essence, social content, temporal parameters, etc. of a historical epoch. Characterising the concept epoch or era, Lenin wrote:

in each of them there are and will always be individual and partial movements, now forward, now backward, there are and always will be various deviations from the

¹ V. I. Lenin, *What the Friends of the People Are and How They Fight the Social Democrats*, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, 1977, p. 140.

average type and mean tempo of the movement We cannot know how rapidly and how successfully the various historical movements in a given epoch will develop but we can and do know *which class* stands at the hub of one epoch or another determining its main content the main direction of its development the main characteristics of the historical situation in that epoch etc ¹

It is the formation that has a decisive influence on world development that determines the content and character of a historical epoch Thus although capitalism had not yet become the dominant system in the world in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the classes and relations of production engendered by it already determined the main line of social development so that the dating of the new historical period in the world that of capitalism begins in those centuries The epoch of capitalism in turn is divided into several periods with their own specific socio historical character corresponding to some one stage in the development of the socio-economic formation of capitalism

The period from the first bourgeois revolutions in the seventeenth century to the Paris Commune in 1871 is the epoch of the upsurge of capitalism In accordance with Lenin's description of it this was the epoch

of the bourgeoisie on the upgrade an epoch of bourgeois democratic movements in general and of bourgeois national movements in particular an epoch of the rapid breakdown of the obsolete feudal absolutist institutions ²

The bourgeoisie was the epoch's guiding class and the main contradiction was that between feudalism which was on its last legs and capitalism gaining a foothold

The period from the Paris Commune to the October Revolution of 1917 in Russia was the epoch of the transition to imperialism It was characterised by a sharpening of the deep internal contradictions of capitalist society when

the day by-day life of the working masses was undergoing an internationalisation—the cities were attracting ever more inhabitants and living conditions in the large cities of the whole world were being levelled out capital was becoming internationalised and at the big factories townsmen and country folk both native and alien were intermingling The class contradictions were growing

¹ V I Lenin Under a False Flag *Collected Works* Vol 21 p 145

² *Ibid.* p 146

ever more acute the employers associations were exercising ever greater pressure on the workers unions sharper and more bitter forms of struggle were arising as for instance mass strikes the cost of living was rising the pressure of finance capital was becoming intolerable etc etc ¹

It was an epoch of the conversion of the capitalist class from a revolutionary force into a reactionary one and of the upsurge of a new class the proletariat

The victory of the socialist revolution in Russia laid the beginning of a qualitatively new epoch in world social development the world historical epoch of the transition from capitalism to socialism which is still continuing Lenin characterised this epoch as follows

The abolition of capitalism and its vestiges and the establishment of the fundamentals of the communist order comprise the content of the new era of world history that has set in It is inevitable that the slogans of our era are and must be the abolition of classes the dictatorship of the proletariat for the purpose of achieving that aim the ruthless exposure of petty bourgeois democratic prejudices concerning freedom and equality and ruthless war on these prejudices ²

He spoke of this new epoch of world history as an era of the rule of a new class a class which is oppressed in every capitalist country but which everywhere is marching forward towards a new life towards victory over the bourgeoisie towards the dictatorship of the proletariat towards the emancipation of mankind from the yoke of capital and from imperialist wars ³

Lenin's definitions as we see bring out the leading trend of world social development and show what class is at the centre of the epoch and what are the main content and distinguishing features of the epoch His definition of the current epoch is of special significance for the theme of our book

Lenin's definition gave revolutionaries clear perspectives of struggle meeting the objective needs of social progress and the interests of the overwhelming majority of the masses of

¹ *Ibid.* p 151

² V I Lenin On the Struggle within the Italian Socialist Party *Collected Works* Vol 31 p 392

³ V I Lenin Fourth Anniversary of the October Revolution *Collected Works*, Vol 33 p 55

the people in all countries. His description of the period of the transition to socialism underlies the subsequent definitions of our epoch that we find in resolutions of the CPSU, other Marxist-Leninist parties, the international meetings of Communist and Workers Parties of 1957, 1960 and 1969, and regional conferences and meetings of Communists.

Let us look at some of them.

The Central Committee's report to the 25th Congress of the CPSU said:

this is an epoch of radical social change. Socialism's positions are expanding and growing stronger. The victories of the national liberation movement are opening up new horizons for countries that have won independence. The class struggle of the working people against monopoly oppression, against the exploiting order, is gaining in intensity. The scale of the revolutionary-democratic, anti-imperialist movement is steadily growing. Taken as a whole, this signifies development of the world revolutionary process.¹

The representatives of Communist and Workers Parties at the 1957 Conference recorded:

The main content of our epoch is the transition from capitalism to socialism, which was begun by the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia. Today more than a third of the population of the world have taken the road of socialism and are building a new life. The tremendous growth of the forces of socialism has stimulated the rapid extension of the anti-imperialist national movement in the post-war period. The progress of socialism and of the national liberation movement has greatly accelerated the disintegration of imperialism. With regard to the greater part of mankind, imperialism has lost its one-time domination. In the imperialist countries, society is rent by deep-going class contradictions and by antagonisms between those countries, while the working class is putting up increasing resistance to the policy of imperialism and the monopolies, fighting for better conditions, democratic rights, for peace and socialism.²

The 1960 International Meeting of Communists stressed that

¹ L. I. Brezhnev, *Report of the CPSU Central Committee and the Immediate Tasks of the Party in Home and Foreign Policy XXVth Congress of the CPSU* (Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow, 1976), p. 32.

² *The Struggle for Peace, Democracy and Socialism* (FLPH, Moscow, 1963), pp. 6, 7.

our time whose main content is the transition from capitalism to socialism is a time of struggle between the two opposing social systems a time of socialist revolutions a time of the breakdown of imperialism of the abolition of the colonial system a time of transition of more peoples to the socialist path of the triumph of socialism and communism on a world wide scale

*It is the principal characteristic of our time that the world socialist system is becoming the decisive factor in the development of society*¹

The 1969 International Meeting of Communist and Workers Parties drew the following conclusion

The events of the past decade bear out that the Marxist Leninist assessment of the character content and chief trends of the present epoch is correct Ours is an epoch of transition from capitalism to socialism²

To analyse the features of the social movements and specific way the crisis of capitalism is manifested in one region or another Communists take it as their starting point that the main content of the present epoch is the progress of nations toward the new social system and define the roads and horizons of the struggle for socialism on that basis

The working class and all working people in the capitalist-dominated part of Europe are struggling for a democratic way out of the crisis which would correspond to the interests of the broad mass of the people and open up the way for a socialist transformation of society³

The 1975 Havana Conference of Communist Parties of Latin America and the Caribbean gave this description of the tendencies of social development in that region

Changes taking place in Latin America are part of a world wide trend towards progress a trend developing in the age of the revolutionary transition from capitalism to socialism⁴

The statement of the conference of Communist and Workers Parties of Arab Countries in 1978 noted

¹ *Ibid.* p 38

² *International Meeting of Communist and Workers Parties Moscow 1969* p 12

³ *For Peace Security Co-operation and Social Progress in Europe Berlin June 29-30 1976* (Novosti Press Agency Publishing House Moscow 1976) p 38

⁴ *Information Bulletin*, 1975 13 12 (292) 32

It is being increasingly confirmed today that our epoch is the epoch of transition from capitalism to socialism. The balance of world forces is continually changing in favour of peace, liberation, democracy and socialism.¹

And the Document adopted by the meeting of a number of Communist and Workers Parties of Africa in 1978 said:

The Socialist orientation of the progressive African states is one of the manifestations of the objective laws of the modern epoch: the epoch of the transition of a growing number of nations from an exploiting system to socialism.²

Time marches on. The revolutionary process is advancing. New forces of revolution are maturing and their striving for unity increasing. Life is constantly introducing new elements into the workers' struggle for peace, democracy and social progress, and acute new issues are arising for Communists. But all the changes taking place before our eyes bear out the theoretical and practical substantiveness and the reality and urgency of Lenin's approach to the problems of our epoch and the correctness of the programmes of the fraternal parties based on it.

The definition of the current epoch made by Marxist-Leninist parties in the joint resolutions of the international Communist movement have several essential points in common which can be briefly summarised as follows:

(1) There is a close continuity in them with Lenin's views on the character, appraisal and motive trends of the epoch, which again bears out the unephemeral significance of Lenin's analysis of it.

(2) Marxist-Leninist parties approach the new phenomena of our times in a creative way, analyse them with scientific objectivity, in other words, develop Lenin's study of the epoch.

(3) The epoch opened by the October Socialist Revolution in Russia is classed by Marxist-Leninists as a single world historical epoch of transition from capitalism to socialism. Like every epoch it has its periods whose historical boundaries are determined by the stages of development of socialism and by qualitative shifts in the deepening of the general crisis of capitalism and by changes in the balance of class forces in the world.

We have to distinguish rigorously between the world historical epoch of the transition to socialism as a whole and

¹ *Information Bulletin*, 1978, 16, 12 (364), 8.

² *Information Bulletin*, 1978, 16, 16/17 (368/369), 14-15.

its various periods. The substitution of an epoch by a period that sometimes happens leads not just to terminological muddle but also to distortion of the content of the historical process. Statements for instance that the formation of a world system of socialism signifies humanity's entry into a qualitatively new historical epoch are coupled with untrue ideas that the epoch of revolution has been passed and that an epoch of evolutionary transition to socialism has set in. But the rise of the world system of socialism did not alter the essence of the epoch of world history opened by the socialist revolution in Russia and was only a stage of the world social revolution: the conversion of the contradiction between socialism and capitalism into the main contradiction of the epoch has by no means abolished the antagonistic character of the contradictions between labour and capital which can only as before be resolved in a revolutionary way.

The periodisation of the current epoch reflects the gradual character of the single world historical process of the transition to socialism. In other words each of its periods constitutes a qualitatively new stage in the development of existing socialism and at the same time corresponds to a certain stage in the deepening of the general crisis of capitalism. Allowing for that our epoch can be divided into periods as follows:

(1) The first period is one of establishing the new socio-economic formation, consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat within the bounds of a single country: the Soviet Union, and capitalism's entry into a period of general crisis. Socialism then affected the course of world events and the development of the revolutionary struggle in the countries of the capitalist world mainly by force of example. But its influence was not confined solely to that. The impact of the Soviet Union on the revolutionary process growing steadily was also embodied in such forms as solidarity with the young Communist Parties in capitalist countries, material help for fighters against imperialism and fascism, defence of the interests of oppressed nations, granting of political asylum to revolutionaries, anti-fascists and democrats, etc. (suffice it to recall that the Soviet Union granted asylum to thousands of fighters against fascism and reaction, supported the people's revolution in Mongolia, actively helped the Chinese revolution, did everything in its power to help Republican Spain). The class struggle already developed then in practice not only within separate capitalist countries where it was headed by Communist Parties but also on the world arena where it was expressed in a contradiction of two opposing social systems that was more and more influencing the course and character of international relations.

(2) The second period was one of the formation of a world socialist system. It was characterised by the growing process of establishing socialism in various countries, conversion of the dictatorship of the proletariat from a national to an international force, the onset of a new stage in the general crisis of capitalism and further contraction of the sphere of imperialist domination. Capitalism and its laws ceased to be the dominant factor in the world and imperialism lost its position in many countries in Europe and Asia.

(3) The third period is one of consolidation of the positions of socialism on a world scale, spread of the socialist system to new countries, further change of the class forces in the world in favour of socialism. The Soviet Union has made historic progress in building developed socialism and communist society. Socialism has been firmly and finally established in a group of countries in Europe and Asia and the first socialist state has arisen in the Western hemisphere with victory of the Cuban revolution. The sphere of operation of the new social system has been considerably widened in Indochina by the victory of the Vietnamese people and reunification of Vietnam and the formation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic. The solidarity of the world socialist community has become stronger and the co-operation and relations of the fraternal socialist countries have been consolidated.

The world progress of the passage of nations to the road of socialism is having an increasingly profound effect on developing countries, the number of them with a socialist orientation that have elected the road of socialist development has grown in recent years.

A serious challenge is being thrown down to imperialism as well within its own citadels. The political role and influence of the working class of capitalist countries has grown immensely and the standard of its class consciousness has risen. Broader and broader masses of the people and members of various strata of the public are being drawn in the fight against imperialism. Communist Parties have consolidated their position in a number of countries and increased their public influence, which ruling circles are forced to reckon with when pursuing their policy both at home and abroad.

The revolutionary process has acquired a truly world scale in our day. There is hardly any region now where a struggle for democracy and social progress has not developed. The interaction of revolutionary currents of various kinds and of the various contingents of the international anti-imperialist movement is developing. The time span of economic, social and political revolutionary changes aimed at overcoming the capitalist system is shortening.

The main feature of the present epoch is that it is no longer world capitalism that determines the general trend of world social development but the state organisation of the proletariat

2 Features of Today s Epoch

The substance of the contemporary historical epoch which is the transition from capitalism to socialism determines its main features They are displayed of course in different ways in different periods but their essence remains unaltered These main features can be reduced to the following

Our epoch is one of struggle of two opposing social systems a struggle that is being waged in the spheres of economics politics and ideology and in which the socialist system has the historical advantage

Take economics In world industrial production the weight of the socialist economy was less than 3 per cent in 1917 roughly 10 per cent in 1937 around 20 per cent in 1950 and more than 40 per cent at the end of the 70s But the point is not just the increase in the weight of socialist countries in world industrial production the trends of growth of the gross social product development rates and efficiency of production are also important Although recent years have not been the most favourable ones for the economies of several socialist countries the economic growth rates of CMEA member countries have still been double those of the developed capitalist countries

Moreover the overriding aim of socialist production we must stress is ever fuller satisfaction of the people s growing material and spiritual needs The economic and social policies of CMEA members are directed towards that The comprehensive solution of the problems of making the people of these countries more prosperous is reflected in systematic growth of public appropriations for education and culture housing and social insurance as well as in a rise of working people s real incomes Growth of the payments and benefits received from social consumption funds (pensions children s allowances students grants etc) make a substantial contribution toward raising the people s standards of living in CMEA countries The social achievements of socialism also include free medical care and the creation of a developed system of public education financed by the government and open to all categories and age groups of the population The countries of the socialist community have put an end to unemployment have provided conditions for a just distribution of material blessings and pursue a policy of low rents and fares

That all adds up to proof of the major achievements of socialism which has provided the conditions for raising the prosperity and cultural development of society

Western propaganda is finding it ever more difficult to conceal the obvious progress of the Soviet Union and other countries of the socialist community both in developing their economies and in raising the standard of living of their working people

In view of the socialist challenge capitalism has been forced to adapt itself to the conditions of the struggle of the two systems and to modernise the machinery of state monopoly control of the economy which it is doing along the lines of a further merging of the monopolies and government ever broader introduction of programming and forecasting production application of the advances of the scientific and technological revolution and intensification of integrative processes in world capitalist business Imperialism of course is not rejecting tried traditional forms of bolstering up the economic situation (carefully masked intensification of the exploitation of working people militarisation of the economy robbery of developing countries etc) In a number of capitalist countries that is all leading to a certain rise of social production and under pressure of the workers class battles to a certain improvement of the latter's condition but only in a few countries and only to a certain increase of production and a certain improvement Marx Engels and Lenin incidentally wrote about such a possibility

As a social system however imperialism cannot provide progressive and even development of the economy check the spontaneous forces of the capitalist market or employ the advances of the scientific and technological revolution in the interests of society as a whole All the essential features of imperialism that Lenin discovered and formulated in his *Imperialism the Highest Stage of Capitalism* are still inherent in it today though the crisis of imperialism has naturally disclosed new features The further deepening of the crisis of the capitalist system is involving all spheres of the affairs of capitalist society—economic social moral and political—and is being displayed in different countries in various forms and on a varying scale

The crisis of 1974-5 was the deepest of the whole postwar period and had several features that are gradually becoming typical of the world capitalist economy's development as a whole namely the simultaneousness of the spread of crisis phenomena of the business cycle to all the main capitalist countries the interweaving of these phenomena with deep structural crises affecting such very important areas of capitalist business as power engineering the production of

primary commodities agriculture and monetary and financial relations There was a sharpening of all the contradictions of capitalist business in the crisis of the mid 1970s Capitalism has not of course stopped developing Leonid Brezhnev said in the CC CPSU Report to the 26th Party Congress But it is immersed in what is already the third economic recession over the past ten years ¹

At the beginning of the 1980s there were signs of another recession affecting most capitalist countries and there began to be clear symptoms of a further deepening of contradictions in which commercial and industrial monetary energy and other crises were even more tightly interwoven while inflation continued to be rampant and unemployment to grow

Western economic experts are almost unanimous in predicting that difficulties and contradictions will inevitably continue during the 1980s if not grow One hardly finds a forecast in their writings that does not mention the danger of a further slowing of economic growth rates rise of prices increase of unemployment and mounting of those morbid processes that have come to be called stagflation i.e combination of economic stagnation and galloping inflation

At the same time Western propaganda often tries to present matters as if the socialist economy too were suffering from the same crisis processes that regularly affect capitalism and as if there were global economic laws of some sort equally inherent in both social systems

Such statements contradict the real state of affairs The economies of the countries of the socialist community and the prosperity of their peoples are fenced off from the anarchy and chaos of the world capitalist market by the objectively operating laws of socialism system of planned management of the economy and the continuously deepening international socialist division of labour The worsening of the world economic situation has of course complicated conditions for development of their economies to a certain extent (as was noted at the 26th Congress of the CPSU) ² The socialist community does not exist in isolation from the world division of labour and of course has to take the processes developing on the world market into account Intensive development of the economy calls for example for steady imports of machinery and equipment that are increasing in price At the same time the prices for some of their traditional exports are rising much more slowly than those of imported goods These phenomena which are due to causes that do not depend on

¹ L. I. Brezhnev *Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU to the XXVI Congress.* p 27

² *Ibid* p 12

the socialist countries have a retarding effect on the efficiency of their production both for export and the home market

We know from experience that the socialist countries can by collective efforts limit the adverse effects of the muddle on the world market on their economies. The Soviet Union for example is doing everything it can (and always has) to help its partners in CMEA counter the anarchy of the world economic situation and keep costs to a minimum. Because of planned economic management and fraternal mutual aid the crisis phenomena in the capitalist world cannot influence the general trends of development of the countries of the socialist community or slow down their growth rates or the rate of the rise in the working people's well being in any essential way

As for Western propaganda's assertions distorting the nature of the socialist economy their main aim is to divert attention from the social calamities generated by private property and to convince the masses of the people that these hardships are inevitable under any system since they are caused (they say) by the operation of universal laws of some sort. In actual fact however these phenomena in the capitalist world which do not and cannot exist in socialist countries are due to the character of the exploiter system and manifest the historically transitory universal law of capitalist accumulation by which there is a polarisation of wealth and poverty and the formation of a reserve army of labour

In spite of the unprecedented possibilities now being presented by the present development of science and engineering capitalist society is incapable of abolishing unemployment want and uncertainty about tomorrow. State monopoly capitalism is striving in forcing scientific and technical development to use it to maintain its position increase superprofits and perfect exploitation of the working people. The result is a sharpening of the contradictions between the social character of production and the capitalist form of appropriation and a deepening of social antagonisms

More and more people in the capitalist world are becoming convinced that the gap between growth of the volume of production and productivity of labour on the one hand and the level of real wages on the other is not only not being reduced but is even being widened and that all the talk of the defenders of capitalism about the income revolution and social partnership is so much eyewash

In the United States for example as Gus Hall General Secretary of the CPUSA has noted taxes

now take 37 per cent of all workers wages Over 400 billion dollars are taken from workers paychecks every year over 70 per cent of a worker s wages now go for taxes and housing—either rent or mortgage payments¹

The much ballyhooed campaign to eradicate poverty begun in 1964 collapsed

According to the International Labour Organisation 60 million people in the 24 capitalist member countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development live in poverty in Italy 51 per cent of the population lives in places designated by the authorities as distressed areas in Belgium 17 per cent and in West Germany 12 per cent In Great Britain 22.9 per cent of its population live below the accepted social standard of poverty—mostly unemployed the elderly disabled and single mothers

Unemployment remains a permanent fellow traveller of capitalism The total number of unemployed in the developed capitalist countries had risen to 19 million at the beginning of the 1980s

Racial and national minorities suffer from intensified exploitation and discrimination Immigrant workers are one of the most destitute groups of workers in developed capitalist countries Their working week is usually longer and their rates of pay lower than for the same work done by local workers In Belgium the wage gap is between 20 and 40 per cent and in France is as much as 57 per cent

The capitalist class which once entered the arena of social struggle under the banner of democracy has now become the standard bearer of reaction The problem that monopoly capitalism is coming up against under sharpening crisis is one (in the opinion of its apologists) of a choice between two possible courses (a) to preserve the machinery of capitalist democracy which is disorganised and demonstrating its incapacity to serve the interests of the ruling elite or (b) to try and replace it by another form of political rule to wit a totalitarian one Imperialism sees and recognises only this dilemma having rejected in advance the third solution namely that which entails consistent development of the struggle of the democratic masses and working people Dictatorship of a fascist type may not suit the monopoly capitalist class in all respects but in principle it does not contradict its fundamental class interests At the same time any form of involvement of the working people in the

¹ Gus Hall The Urgency of Working-Class Internationalism Today *Political Affairs*, 1979 57 3 22

management of public affairs is at bottom unacceptable to the monopolies

Imperialism is reaction all along the line ¹ The hub of this description of imperialism of Lenin's does not alter however the political situation concretely takes shape at any stage of capitalist countries social development Unfortunately however the advances and mounting influence of the democratic forces generate notions in their milieu that monopoly capital having been forced to make certain concessions is becoming less reactionary The political and ideological trends stimulated by the aggravation of the general crisis of capitalism over the past decade in fact demonstrate that this is an illusion that monopoly capital is ready at the critical moment in order to defend its basic interests to resort to the most brutal repression against democracy and to crude abolition of those of its forms and institutions that have ceased to serve it effectively

Socialism is thus demonstrating its superiority over capitalism in the struggle of the two systems in all its main spheres—economic political and ideological During this struggle the countries of the socialist community are steadily consolidating their position which is leading to a further change of world forces in favour of socialism and to an extension and acceleration of social renovation of the world

Our epoch is one of the working people's class struggle an epoch of socialist revolutions

The communist formation is born in revolutionary struggle in acute struggle between the forces of reaction and imperialism and the forces of socialism To win in this struggle there have to be radical changes in and a break up of the whole structure of exploiter society Socialism Marx proclaimed cannot be realised without *revolution* ² All opportunists vain attempts to prove the possibility of another evolutionary road and of a gradual transformation of capitalism into socialism continue to fail

The first successful attempt to carry out a proletarian revolution was made by the French workers who set up the Paris Commune in 1871 which survived for 71 days But the era of socialist revolutions was opened by the triumph of the workers and peasants in Russia in October 1917 The breaking of the imperialist chain and founding of the world's first socialist state radically altered the conditions for the struggle

¹ V I Lenin *Collected Works*, 5th Russian Edition Vol 27 (Politizdat Moscow) p 419

² Karl Marx Critical Marginal Notes on the Article The King of Prussia and Social Reform By a Prussian In Karl Marx Frederick Engels *Collected Works*, Vol 3 (Progress Publishers Moscow 1975) p 200

for socialism in the world. In a whole number of capitalist countries the authority of the capitalist class was faced with a real threat, and the state machine of imperialism which had hitherto seemed omnipotent began to backfire badly. Under the impact of the October Revolution in Russia the revolutionary activity of the proletariat and of the broad masses of the working people rose in the capitalist world and there was a powerful upsurge of the national liberation movement in the colonies and dependent countries. At the beginning of 1918 a proletarian revolution broke out in Finland. In September 1918 there was a soldiers' uprising in Bulgaria aimed at overthrowing the monarchy and establishing a people's republic. The bourgeois democratic revolutions begun in October and November 1918 in Hungary, Bavaria and Slovakia grew into socialist ones. In Germany power in fact belonged to the working class at the end of 1918 and beginning of 1919.

All these revolutions unfortunately were suppressed by the superior forces of reaction. The objective conditions for victory of the revolution existed then in many other countries as well, but the moment was missed because of the weakness of the subjective factor and the absence of revolutionary proletarian parties. A period of temporary stabilisation of capitalism set in.

The Soviet Union was in capitalist encirclement for almost three decades and built socialism in incredibly difficult conditions. Capitalism gave birth to fascism and the Second World War which cost mankind enormous losses and sacrifices.

World War II accelerated the breaking up of capitalism and victory of socialism. It intensified the workers' hatred of imperialism which engenders war and its most monstrous child, fascism. The defeat of the armed fascist hordes in which the Soviet Union played the main role raised the prestige and authority of the USSR, the country of socialism, in the eyes of all progressive mankind. Favourable conditions were provided in the world for the development of powerful forces of peace, democracy and socialism.

After the Soviet Union and Mongolia socialist revolutions were victorious in several other countries and a world socialist system arose embracing an immense territory in Europe and Asia.

The whole historical experience of our epoch shows the complete bankruptcy of social reformist conceptions of a peaceful evolutionary growing over of capitalism into socialism. Since the time of Eduard Bernstein social reformists have taken the thesis of the strict dependence of the rise of socialism on the maturity of the capitalist economy as their

starting point¹ The strategy stemming from this premise is oriented on a spontaneous growing over of capitalism into socialism an evolution that should they say occur of itself by virtue simply of certain objective internal factors inherent in capitalism and without revolutionary struggle of the working class and its parties

We sometimes also meet arguments that the need for a revolutionary transformation of society and keeping faith with Marxist theory disappears as national income grows and the mean standard of living in a country rises

The crisis of the capitalist system that shook the very foundations of the capitalist world throughout the 1970s and once more convincingly demonstrated the historical bankruptcy of the capitalist system refuted the theoretical maxims of social reformism exposed the sterility of ideas that envisage elimination of the defects of capitalism by way of reformist cosmetics The Social Democratic governments that quite often held office in several developed capitalist countries during the postwar period of course managed to achieve a certain improvement in the condition of the working masses but these partial gains were not in any way comparable with the profits that fell to the share of Big Business which has been flourishing under capitalism peacefully growing over into socialism

The masses disillusionment with the theoretical principles and practical activity of the apologists of reformism has contributed to a decline in the influence of socialist and Social Democratic parties and to the many defeats suffered by them in elections in a whole number of countries At the same time signs have developed within these parties of a rise in the influence of left currents that reject the right wing leaders years-old practice of class collaboration with Big Business This tendency is being stimulated by the upsurge in the workers struggle against monopoly capital for radical social transformations

The sharpening of the class struggle in capitalist countries is primarily displayed in a mounting strike movement The attempts of ruling circles to lower the tension of the class struggle by social reforms of one sort or another are of no avail The number of strikes in capitalist countries rose over the past decade by more than a third involving, according to official data around 250 million persons² While the number of strikers has been increasing there

¹ E Bernstein *Die Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus und die Aufgaben der Sozialdemokratie* (Dietz Verlag Stuttgart 1899)

² L I Brezhnev *Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU to the XXVI Congress.* p 28

have been important qualitative changes in the strike movement and a transition from defensive tactics to predominantly offensive ones has been traceable in proletarian actions and there has also been a growing proportion of general strikes and a spread of such militant forms of action as workers occupation of factories threatened with closure. An important feature of the current stage in the strike movement is the broadening of the social composition of the strikers. More and more new categories of workers are being involved viz civil servants engineers and technicians scientific workers employees in the services sphere and so on.

The sharpening and extension of the class struggle is sapping and undermining capitalism. The pressure of the masses of the workers is shackling the forces of imperialism forcing them to go onto the defensive and weakening their influence on the course of the struggle on the world scene. In capitalist countries as the final resolution of the Berlin Conference of European Communist and Workers Parties in 1976 said

there is a growth in the activities of the working class and other broad social and political forces. These struggles are directed against the foundations of rule by monopoly capital.¹

The Declaration of the Conference of Communist Parties of Latin America and the Caribbean stressed that

the working class is improving its organisation and emerging as a social force capable of determining the political situation in various Latin American countries. The proletariat is striving to become the main factor cementing all other democratic and anti imperialist social strata.²

Marxist Leninists by no means of course entertain illusions about the rates and timing of the working class revolutionary struggle in the world. Being realists and very conscious of the difficulties that have still to be surmounted and what ebbs and flows of the revolutionary struggle must lie ahead they needless to say do not expect victory of the socialist revolution in the world almost any day now. But it is an incontrovertible fact of history that the revolutionary restructuring of society begun by the Great October Revolution continues with mounting force involving more and more

¹ *For Peace Security Cooperation and Social Progress in Europe* Berlin June 29-30 1976 (Novosti Press Agency Publishing House 1976) p 35

² *Information Bulletin* (Prague) 1975 13 12 (292) 39

new countries and nations. Triumphant socialist revolutions, the sharpening of social antagonisms and the upsurge of the class struggle in capitalist countries are more and more convincingly confirming Lenin's conclusions about the revolutionary character of our epoch and that the transition to socialism can only be realised by the revolutionary road.

Our epoch is one of democratic and national revolutions and liquidation of the colonial system

It is enough to look at the political map of the world to see the results of the peoples' liberation struggle against imperialism. At the time of the October Revolution of 1917, 66 per cent of the world's population lived in conditions of colonial and imperialist oppression on 77 per cent of the territory of the globe. Imperialism had converted its colonial possessions into agrarian appendages producing primary products. The capitalist system was based for centuries on its colonies and derived reserves from them both for its growth and enrichment and for struggle against the revolutionary movement. The peoples of the colonial countries were in a state of poverty and complete denial of civil rights.

The socialist revolution in Russia struck a blow at the system of colonial domination and promoted conversion of the working masses of the colonial countries into an active factor of world history into a power undermining the foundations of imperialism. The defeat of Nazi Germany and militarist Japan in World War II and the decisive contribution that the Soviet Union made to its outcome led to a large number of new countries dropping out of the orbit of the capitalist system and to a marked weakening of imperialism's position throughout the world. As a result, conditions were provided for advance of national liberation revolutions in a number of countries of the colonial periphery of imperialism. The formation and consolidation of a world system of socialism, the chief anti-imperialist force, radically altered the whole situation in the world and was immensely conducive to break-down of the colonial empires.

More than 2000 million people escaped from colonial servitude as a result of the post-World War II liberation movement and around 80 countries won national independence. Liquidation of the colonial empires was in fact completed in the 1970s. Newly liberated countries now account for nearly two thirds of all the states of the world.

The break-up of the colonial empires resulted in capitalism's being deprived to a considerable extent of the source of fabulous profits and cheap raw materials and of substantial support in its fight against the revolutionary movement. Take India. As the British capitalist class itself admitted, India was a gold mine for Great Britain. British imperialists pumped

between £150 and £180 million a year from that colony and ten colonial slaves worked for every Britisher. Belgium got hundreds of millions of dollars in colonial profits annually from exploitation of the Congo. The financial magnates of capital also pumped immense wealth out of the other colonial countries. The imperialists still retain strong economic positions; it is true in the former colonies and semi-colonial countries, but the foreign monopolies are being ousted from these countries which are creating and developing their own industry.

The developing countries are playing an ever bigger role as a factor in the world anti-imperialist movement. The new economic conditions created in them and the extension of their co-operation with the world of socialism are enabling them with increasing success to win economic independence from the capitalist system.

That all explains why imperialism is furiously striving to retain its influence in the former colonial and dependent countries and is endeavouring by methods of neo-colonialism to hinder the economic and social progress of countries that have won political independence. The imperialists are saddling them with economic agreements and military and political pacts that restrict their sovereignty and exploit them through unbalanced exchange of commodities, manipulation of prices and exchange rates, the pressure of international financial institutions and so on. The gap between the industrially developed capitalist countries and most of the lands of Asia, Africa and Latin America is widening as a result. By encouraging reactionary nationalism imperialism is trying to create divisions inside these countries and splits among them, and to integrate them into the capitalist system. In spite of these efforts, however, the national liberation movement maintains its anti-imperialist direction while the struggle for social emancipation is coming more and more to the fore in them.

The progressive forces of developing countries see the highroad of social progress in anti-imperialist reforms. In the present historical situation, in which socialism is becoming the decisive factor of world development, these forces are getting a chance to transform the social structure of their countries gradually and to prepare the conditions for subsequent transition to socialism. The conditions needed for success on this road are consistent anti-imperialism, consolidation of the unity of patriotic forces and a firm alliance with socialist countries and the international Communist and workers movement.

Deepening of the interaction of world socialism, the international working class and the national liberation move

ment is a leading trend of world development and a characteristic feature of the contemporary epoch

The immense significance of this objectively established trend for advance of the world revolutionary process is attested to by many facts of our time. Take for example the events of 1974 in Portugal. The progressive forces of that country carried out a democratic revolution whose success was determined by the heroic struggle of the Portuguese working class, working people and all opponents of the fascist dictatorship. The passage of the Portuguese army to the side of the people which decided the fate of the fascist regime was also obviously predetermined by the heavy defeats suffered by the regime in wars against African peoples. So the joint struggle on two fronts against the fascist-colonial dictatorship led to its collapse in the metropolis itself before its final defeat in the colonies was recognised. At the same time when objectively evaluating the outstanding role of the national liberation struggle of the peoples of the Portuguese colonies we must not forget the contribution made to this struggle by the political, economic and military might of the countries of the socialist community.

That is a living example of the interaction of the revolutionary forces which is playing an immense role not only in the struggle for democracy and national emancipation but also in the struggle for socialism. The Chairman of the MPLA (Party of Labour) and President of Angola, dos Santos said at the 26th Congress of the CPSU:

The Angolan Revolution continues its irreversible march toward the building of socialism. And it is encouraging to state that as before we are not travelling it alone. We can count on the aid of the socialist countries and of all the forces of peace and progress.¹

It is also impossible to forget another trend of course. There are quite a few developing countries in which the economic and political situation of the capitalist class has been consolidated and nationalist forces activated and it is still an open question for many former colonies and semi-colonies which road of social development to take. A tense class and political struggle which is the hub of the public affairs of each developing country is being waged to decide it.

But the main point is that the struggle of nations for

¹ *The Words of Friends: Greetings Extended to the XXVI Congress of the CPSU by Communist Workers' National Democratic and Socialist Parties* (Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1982), p. 367.

democracy and national emancipation is increasingly growing in our epoch into a fight against imperialism and capitalism. The strengthening of anti-capitalist tendencies in the national liberation movement, the social reforms in countries of a socialist orientation and the deepening anti-imperialist character of the policies of most developing countries are significant phenomena of our times attesting to the marked shrinking of imperialism's sphere of dominance and influence.

The present epoch is one of the collapse of capitalism and triumph of communism on a world scale

Such is the content and main feature of the present epoch which stems directly from the features and peculiarities noted above and is their concentrated expression. Let us consider several concrete examples that confirm the powerlessness of imperialism to block the world revolutionary process.

The war in Vietnam, in which the biggest imperialist power, the United States of America, could not achieve its counter-revolutionary aims, is the most indicative example. The heroism of the Vietnamese people and the Communist Party of Vietnam's bold leadership of their struggle, the many-sided aid given to the Vietnamese people by socialist countries (primarily by the Soviet Union) and the militant ever-mounting solidarity with the people of Vietnam throughout the world were the reasons for the failure of US policy in Vietnam and throughout Indochina.

Neither economic blockade nor imperialism's provocative and disruptive actions of various kinds have been able to prevent building of the first bastion of socialism in the Western hemisphere, i.e. in Cuba.

The imperialists' attempts to revise the results of World War II in Europe and Asia have failed. International recognition of the German Democratic Republic and normalisation of most countries' relations with it were a substantial contribution to consolidating international security and the position of socialism.

Following the historic victory of the Vietnamese people, the peoples of Laos and Kampuchea got the upper hand in the fight against the imperialist aggressors and internal counter-revolutionary elements supported by the forces of international reaction and hegemony. The last colonial empire, the Portuguese, has ceased to exist, and the peoples of Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, São Tomé and Príncipe and the Cape Verde Islands have won national independence. The peoples of Afghanistan, Ethiopia and the South Yemen have taken the road of far-reaching social transformations, overcoming the reckless resistance of internal and external reaction. The anti-popular monarchist regime in Iran has collapsed. The almost half-century dictatorship of the Somoza

family in Nicaragua was ended by the self sacrificing struggle of the patriotic forces And the people of Zimbabwe achieved independence

All these examples are eloquent evidence that imperialism has not the forces to regain its lost positions and block or retard the revolutionary process

Does this mean that imperialism has ceased to be a serious dangerous opponent of the revolutionary movement? Of course not Imperialism is just as aggressive as ever before and has not given up preparations for war against the socialist countries and in particular against the Soviet Union (despite the risk to itself) it is striving by a policy of building bridges and softening separate socialist countries to pull them away from the socialist community it is multiplying its efforts to keep countries recently emancipated from colonial oppression under the heel of neocolonialism it is organising reactionary coups d etat in countries struggling for independent development it is employing the most devious means to hamper the workers fight in capitalist countries to split Communist Parties and shift them to reformist positions and to hold back the irreversible process of the decay of capitalism as a system

Underestimation of the imperialist danger like overestimation of it is harmful for the revolutionary forces extremes demobilise Communists and workers in their anti imperialist struggle The fraternal parties therefore stress the need to activate this struggle and clearly signpost its main directions The statement of the 1969 Moscow Meeting of Communist and Workers Parties said

The working class the democratic and revolutionary forces the peoples must unite and act jointly in order to put an end to imperialism s criminal actions which can bring still graver suffering to mankind To curb the aggressors and liberate mankind from imperialism is the mission of the working class of all the anti imperialist forces fighting for peace democracy national independence and socialism¹

Imperialism s increasing attempts in recent years to prevent a further shrinking of its sphere of domination to slow down the revolutionary process and to weaken the influence of existing socialism are being resolutely rebuffed by the revolutionary forces of the world which are firmly retaining the initiative in the fight against the old social system These attempts have no future The world process of the transition

¹ *International Meeting of Communist and Workers Parties Moscow 1969 p 21*

to socialism is governed by objective laws before which the opponents of social changes are powerless they make mankind's forward movement to communism irreversible

*Our epoch is one of the revolutionary transforming activity of Communist Parties*¹

The significance of the revolutionary creativity of the masses of the people above all of the advanced force of contemporary social development the working class has risen to an extraordinary degree Communist Parties guided by Marxist Leninist theory are lighting the road to democratic reforms for the people and to the socialist revolution and the building of socialism and communism and are raising the working class and its allies to struggle

The main features of today's epoch as we see fully confirm Communists' conclusion that the epoch we are living in is one of transition from capitalism to socialism and that the new social system will win more and more new victories convincingly demonstrating its superiority over capitalism

Capitalism is doomed It cannot offer the workers answers to their acute social and political problems It cannot rid people of the menace of hunger and poverty and of new wars A few years before the 1917 Revolution in Russia Lenin wrote

On all sides at every step one comes across problems which man is quite capable of solving *immediately* but capitalism is in the way It has amassed enormous wealth—and has made men the *slaves* of this wealth It has solved the most complicated technical problems—and has blocked the application of technical improvements

Civilisation freedom and wealth under capitalism call to mind the rich glutton who are rotting alive but will not let what is young live on

But the young is growing and will emerge supreme in spite of all²

3 The Dynamism of the Development and Deepening of the World's Contradictions

Today's epoch has no equal in the strength breadth and depth of its economic social and ideological revolutionary changes It has an unusual dynamism and speed of develop

¹ The role of Communist Parties as a most important factor in mankind's transition to communism is discussed in a following section of this chapter

² V I Lenin *Civilised Barbarism Collected Works*, Vol 19 p 389

ment with rapid succession of events and a marked acceleration of social processes

As we know it took several millennia to replace the clan/tribal system by slavery and around 700 years for feudalism to take the place of slavery. Capitalism came out on top in the struggle against feudalism in a matter of around 300 years. The process of the replacement of the capitalist system by the socialist has so far lasted a little more than 65 years and although it has not yet been completed the transformations made are broader and deeper than the changes that marked the advent of preceding formations. In a little more than half a century after 1917 the socialist system had been established in 14 countries. At the beginning of the 1980s socialist countries occupied 26.5 per cent of the area of the world on which one third of all mankind lived. These figures speak volumes about the precipitous replacement of the capitalist formation by the socialist.

That is only one side of the medal however the other side is that there is an ever faster development of the productive forces with the years which is causing deep shifts in social relations. Under capitalism this means a deepening of its main contradiction (i.e. between the social character of production and the private form of appropriation) and of all its social antagonisms and consequently a sharpening of the class struggle. Under socialism development of the productive forces on the contrary means a raising of the degree to which the relations of production accord with them, a further obliteration of class differences and consolidation of socialism's positions in the struggle with capitalism which allows us to conclude that on the historical plane the rates of the replacement of capitalism by socialism are not only not declining but on the contrary are increasing. In order to understand this properly we need to analyse the contradictions inherent in our epoch. The movement of society along an ascending line is the result of solving the contradictions within it and overcoming the conflicts between opposites.

The whole history of mankind is one of the rise, sharpening and resolution of various contradictions. In exploiter society it is the antagonism between the productive forces and the relations of production between the ruling classes and the oppressed masses, the contradictions between the basis and superstructure within the ruling elite, within the separate elements of the superstructure and so on and so forth. And when contradictions take the form of social conflicts they always find their resolution only through acute class struggle.

After the triumph of socialist revolutions in the Soviet Union and later in other countries new types of contradiction arose in

the world and at the same time there were changes in the scale and forms of manifestation of the contradictions inherent in capitalist society

Today's epoch is a complex intertwining of very acute contradictions including those between socialism and capitalism between separate capitalist countries within imperialist society between the social character of production and the private mode of appropriation between exploiters and exploited between peoples struggling for national independence and their oppressors between the forces of war and peace etc and also economic social and political contradictions Given that what then is the main contradiction determining the whole course of historical development?

The main contradiction of the capitalist system is that between the social character of production and the private mode of appropriation This contradiction grows as capitalism increasingly socialises production and centralises management As for the contradictions on the international plane the chief one is that between the two opposing social systems

Capitalist society as a whole is a system in which the contradiction between labour and capital is resolved in favour of capital Socialist society on the contrary realises the victory of labour over capital We thus see two opposites Labour and capital while preserving the old relations within capitalist society enter the world arena by acquiring a new character and a new form How is this expressed?

On the one hand the sharp change in the balance of forces between the proletariat and the capitalist class on a world scale affects the contradiction between labour and capital creating qualitatively new opportunities for the working class to fight for its aims On the other hand the class struggle now manifests itself as well as a fight between states and between two systems the socialist and the capitalist The contradiction between labour and capital on the world arena therefore considerably exceeds the internal antagonisms of capitalist society in power and significance and becomes the decisive contradiction of world development

The contradiction between socialism and capitalism which arose after the triumph of the October Revolution in Russia immediately began to influence development of the class struggle on a world scale Speaking at the Second Congress of the Comintern Lenin stressed that

in the present world situation following the imperialist war reciprocal relations between peoples and the world political system as a whole are determined by the struggle waged by a small group of imperialist nations

against the Soviet movement and the Soviet states headed by Soviet Russia ¹

In one of the resolutions drafted for the Congress he wrote

World political developments are of necessity concentrated on a single focus—the struggle of the world bourgeoisie against the Soviet Russian Republic around which are inevitably grouped on the one hand the Soviet movements of the advanced workers in all countries and on the other all the national liberation movements in the colonies and among the oppressed nationalities ²

As socialism becomes stronger the main contradiction of the modern world is constantly growing. At present it is being displayed particularly actively and is becoming deeper and deeper. The dependence of all the problems of modern times on the struggle of the two social systems in world affairs has been greatly intensified. This is associated with the following circumstances:

(1) The positive activity of the working class, its revolutionary vanguards and the states of the socialist community is playing a decisive role in resolving the main contradiction between capitalism and socialism. Their advances are accelerating social progress since they are consolidating the positions of the revolutionary democratic peace forces in all countries. It is also important to stress the following point: Marxism-Leninism, which has become firmly established as the leading ideology of the society that is building socialism and communism, has greatly increased its impact on the consciousness of millions upon millions of working people struggling in capitalist countries; the possibilities of rationally using the efforts of the various strata of society to eliminate outworn social relations are thus being considerably extended.

(2) The struggle of the two systems is objectively drawing the broadest masses of the people into movement, and their role in the historical process has risen significantly. In the comparatively short time since World War II there have been very deep transformations in the social, political and national affairs of dozens of states; transformations that have a clearly expressed anti-imperialist character and have opened up broad horizons and new opportunities for fighting capitalism. This fight began to have a large-scale character as regards both the forces involved and the problems being resolved by

¹ V. I. Lenin. The Second Congress of the Communist International. July 19–August 7, 1920. *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 241.

² V. I. Lenin. Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and Colonial Questions. *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 146.

it Its subjects are now also states as well as separate revolutionary parties It is influencing both the internal policies of the ruling circles of capitalist countries and the solution of radical issues of international politics and the development of the whole capitalist system

(3) The scientific and technical revolution which objectively needs socialist relations of production for its unimpeded development and which is developing more and more broadly in the countries of socialism is sharply aggravating the contradiction between the social character of labour and the private form of appropriation and on that basis the other contradictions as well of capitalist society This scientific and technological revolution which is fundamentally altering many aspects of the production process is accelerating various social phenomena including the class stratification of society is leading to a steep increase in the number of wage earners and is more and more convincingly demonstrating the unnecessariness and parasitism of the capitalist class Existing socialism by providing favourable conditions for scientific and technical progress and utilisation of its advances in the interests of the workers is therefore not only consolidating its position in the fight against capitalism on the world stage but is also as an example of successful solution of social problems thanks to the scientific and technological revolution stimulating the anti monopoly fight in capitalist countries

All these circumstances which demonstrate the immense importance of the main contradiction of our epoch neither weaken nor abolish the other contradictions Take for example the contradiction between wage labour and capital It is still a very important force undermining capitalism If one leaves this out of account an illusion can arise that since the main contradiction is the one between the two social systems the proletariat can neglect the class struggle in capitalist countries and sit quietly back until existing socialism overcomes its opponent It is also harmful to underestimate the main contradiction the thesis of relying simply on one's own forces in the fight against capitalism is likewise untenable That kind of approach to the class struggle in capitalist countries leads to separating it from the struggle of the two systems on the international arena and means as well to weaken the revolutionary contingents in each country and the world revolutionary movement as a whole

The same can be said of the other contradictions The law of capitalism's uneven economic and political development continues to operate at full strength in the epoch of imperialism which leads to an intensification of interimperialist contradictions Lenin called it the absolute law of

capitalism¹ Capitalism has always developed unevenly and still does which follows not only from the objective conditions of the international division of labour and the existence of differences in natural economic technical and other conditions for extracting maximum profit but also from the anarchic nature of capitalism based on private property and the strength of monopolies The *even* development of different undertakings trusts branches of industry or countries is impossible under capitalism Lenin stressed² Under imperialism he pointed out the unevenness of capitalist development is intensified

Today's situation in the world of capitalism confirms these statements of Lenin's Under the impact of factors like the scientific and industrial revolution qualitative shifts in the mechanism of capitalist reproduction and international trade economic competition of the two systems growth of the capitalist state's regulatory intervention in economic and social affairs and strengthening of the tendency toward integration of the capitalist economy the forms of manifestation of the law of uneven development of capitalism are of course altering But that does not by any means lead to a weakening of interimperialist contradictions on the contrary it is deepening them

As a result of the shifts that have occurred in the world economy of capitalism since the war the United States has lost the undivided hegemony it had in the early post war years There has been a steady decline in its share in industrial production The consolidation of the economies of Western Europe and Japan has led at the same time to their transformation into independent centres of interimperialist rivalry The deepening of the international division of labour strengthening of the interdependence of national economies growth of the strength and influence of international monopolies no less than the crises upheavals of the capitalist economy throughout the 1970s are all sharpening this rivalry giving it a particularly complicated multifaceted character The bitterness of the fight in the sphere of international enterprise in the monetary sphere in the struggle to control world commodity markets and sources of primary products and fuel and energy resources had become a distinguishing feature of world capitalism at the turn of the 1980s

The factor of military power is playing a foremost role in development of the contradictions rending the imperialist

¹ See V I Lenin On the Slogan for a United States of Europe *Collected Works* Vol 21 p 342

² V I Lenin Imperialism the Highest Stage of Capitalism *Collected Works* Vol 22 1974 p 295

camp proper and in the struggle for predominant influence in it. The USA's claims to supreme leadership of the Western world are openly based on the superiority of US military might. At the same time the endeavours of a certain part of the ruling class of Western Europe to escape from American hegemony are a factor stimulating an upward tendency in their own military potential, the creation of an independent strike force and so on. Interimperialist rivalry also has consequences in the increasingly fierce competition in the arms trade.

The contradictions between imperialism and the developing countries are among the major contradictions of today's world. The collapse of the colonial empires injected a new quality into them, but the contradictions themselves remain and have not been softened at all. The many armed conflicts arising in the zone of the national liberation struggle in the past decade as a result of open imperialist intervention in the domestic affairs of countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America clearly indicate imperialism's readiness to give these contradictions a more acute military form.

Communists are studying all these contradictions deeply and considering them in close relation with the main contradiction of our epoch, which reflects the leading pattern of social development. Marxism-Leninism's recognition of this contradiction helps the revolutionary movement to build its strategy properly and to seek the most effective ways and means of solving the conflicts of modern society and speeding the victory of socialism.

That is why the ideological opponents of Marxism-Leninism are striving to conceal the essence of social processes and hide the essence of social contradictions and the means of resolving them from the workers. In his report to the 26th Congress of the CPSU, Leonid Brezhnev pointed out another group of contradictions now characteristic of the capitalist world:

The difficulties experienced by capitalism also affect its policy, including foreign policy. The struggle over basic issues of the capitalist countries' foreign policy course has become tenser.¹

Three main trends can be distinguished in the anti-Marxian interpretations of the main contradiction of today.²

¹ L. I. Brezhnev, *Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU to the XXVI Congress*, p. 28.

² It is not the author's aim here to go into anti-Marxian conceptions on this matter.

The first trend includes capitalist conceptions that treat human history as the passage of several stages rather than a sequence of socio-economic formations. The adherents of these theories grasp at external signs common to all epochs drawing arbitrary parallels for example between the uprisings of slaves and socialist revolutions between the wars of antiquity and modern wars and so on. As a rule they ignore the differences in socio-economic conditions of the various epochs the social results of the historical processes and the dialectic of the development of the productive forces and relations of production. As a result they draw conclusions about the absence of progress in human history or recognise progress only in science and engineering. They deny the objective need for and purposefulness of class struggle considering it to be without promise or prospects and not in accord with the laws of history.

These theories became particularly widespread in Western social studies in the 1920s. The conservative German philosopher Spengler's idea of cultural cycles became very popular with the Western intelligentsia according to Spengler the same forms of social structure are regularly repeated in history and history is a coexistence or succession of cultures each of which is unique and has nothing in common with other cultural worlds. He considered it impossible to trace any succession of separate phenomena in history and that there was no progress in it from which it followed that class struggle and social revolutions were absurd.

The British philosopher and historian Arnold Toynbee who had a great influence on the development of modern Western social studies expressed similar views. According to him mankind has passed through a whole series of civilisations which were of equal value and simultaneous from a philosophical viewpoint.

The theory of stages of the American political scientist Walt Rostow was once very popular in the West. It assumed that all world history had passed through five stages of development viz traditional society society with prerequisites of an ascent society of ascent mature society and a mass consumption society. Rostow made his division on the basis of separate elements of production drawn from a single whole such as the level of engineering and technology and the application of scientific discoveries in production. The sociological scheme constructed from them denies the class struggle as the motor of social progress and reduces the contradictions between capitalism and socialism to differences in levels of economic scientific and technical development.

All these theories basically have an apologetic character and oppose the Marxist Leninist conception of society based on

the idea of its dialectical development. They put forward a mechanical scheme of development that ignores social contradictions and denies or belittles the role of classes and class struggle in world history. The various versions of the theory of stages are thus ideological barriers in the way of understanding of the true patterns of society's development.

A second trend of anti-Marxian interpretations of the main contradiction of the present epoch is expressed in attempts to cloak the difference in principle between socialism and capitalism by various conceptions of convergence, merging and rapprochement of the two opposing systems.

Some capitalist and reformist theorists say that capitalism and socialism are gradually losing their oppositeness and acquiring more and more features in common and that in the long run they will merge into a single mixed system. In their view the various socio-political systems will lose their fundamental character because of the scientific and technological revolution and development of the means of communication which will also make it possible to reconcile ideologies.

The methodological basis of ideas of that kind is the substitution of technical factors for social ones, the depiction of socialism and capitalism as systems allegedly driven by certain common impulses and a differentiating of the system of socio-economic relations of capitalism and socialism into abstract allegedly similar elements that would permit of all sorts of combination. Accordingly it is suggested that there is a plurality of ways of organising society socio-economically on a common basis of industrialism (interpreted abstractly and without relation to classes).

Furthermore a number of imperialist ideologists try to prove that a mixed economy, a system of social enterprise has already arisen in place of the traditional capitalist economy. Thus the American philosopher and economist Donald Wilhelm writes in a book with the revealing title *Creative Alternatives to Communism* that even the United States, that greatest last bastion of old style capitalism, was surrendered to the new system¹ and that only Marxists still used the term capitalist for attacks on the mixed economy.² Paul Samuelson, the American economist, had propounded the same idea.

¹ Donald Wilhelm *Creative Alternatives to Communism Guidelines for Tomorrow's World* (The Macmillan Press Ltd, London, 1977) p. 31

² *Ibid.* p. 32

Almost unconsciously ours had become a mixed economy with both private and public initiative and control. We had converged with Western Europe to the mixed economy¹

Special attention has been paid of late to substantiating the thesis that the formation and operations of multinational corporations are allegedly a step toward final undermining of traditional capitalism and socialisation of the means of production distribution and exchange creation of so called planetary economic planning and a global social enterprise system

The aim of this kind of theoretical construction becomes clear when their authors for example Wilhelm openly declare their hope that

the global social enterprise system once it is properly developed can help to avert violent revolution to strengthen free institutions and to better the human condition²

The conception of convergence in its different variants is aimed primarily at extolling capitalism as a system at weakening the revolutionary resolution of Communists and at neutralising the working-class movement

Finally the third anti Marxian line aimed at concealing the main contradiction of our epoch is one of dividing the whole world into two groups of poor and rich countries. The main aim of this theory is to hide the social essence of the contradiction between capitalism and socialism. For that purpose all countries are classified by a single criterion viz their level of economic development. For that purpose their differences in social set up the class essence of their policy and the character of the relations between the poor and rich countries are ignored. Consequently socialist countries and the major capitalist countries are put into one group

The positive programme of capitalist ideologists mainly consists in calling on the rich North to share its advantages with the destitute South to enter into joint multilateral co-operation and to open the markets of the rich countries to the poor ones. Reformists echo the capitalist ideologists and also putting imperialist and socialist countries on the same

¹ Paul A. Samuelson *Economics* 8th edition (McGraw Hill New York 1970) p 818

² Donald Wilhelm *Creative Alternatives to Communism Guidelines for Tomorrow's World* p 120

level call for a redistribution of means between North and South

One version of this theory of rich and poor is that of modernisation which divides all existing countries into modern and unmodernised. The latter include the economically backward countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America and also socialist countries. According to this theory they will all gradually be modernised on the model of developed capitalist countries and will come closer to the modern countries. The authors of this theory, the French sociologists Fourastie, Aron and others, consider the present stage of development the second industrial revolution which will allegedly make the socialist revolution unnecessary.

The idea of rich and poor countries will not stand up to criticism. The substitution of differences in prosperity for social contradictions propounded by its authors does not correspond to the situation either in individual countries or on the world arena. It is well known that there are differences in standard of living among the workers of capitalist countries but that does not alter the fact that all workers have basic common interests in the fight against capitalist exploitation. The exploiter classes of backward countries, on the contrary, also have common interests with foreign monopolies irrespective of the fact that the monopolists' standard of living may be quite different. The counterposing of rich and poor countries pursues the aim of deflecting workers from the need to fight the capitalists and on the other hand of arousing distrust of socialist countries among the peoples of developing countries by putting them among the rich countries and so hindering unification of the national liberation and working class movements and hiding the fact that the dividing line runs not between rich and poor nations but between the monopoly capital of various countries on the one hand and the anti-monopolist, anti-imperialist forces including above all the socialist countries on the other.

In the fight to confirm Marxist-Leninist views of the character of the main contradiction of the contemporary epoch we not only come up against clearly hostile interpretations of them but also misunderstanding and even distortion of them in the ranks of the labour movement. There is a certain underestimation of the aggressiveness of imperialism, a forgetting of the aims of its global strategy and even denial of such a strategy. Not everyone maintains a rigorous class position when analysing the anti-imperialist camp: sometimes Communists and the broad democratic forces are equated although there are quite a few differences between them as we know both politically and ideologically.

Attempts to appraise the contradictions of contemporary world development by the non-class yardstick of blocs and to ignore the differences in principle between aggressive imperialist groupings and the alliance of the socialist states that are struggling against imperialist oppression of nations for peace democracy and socialism are also alien to a Marxist Leninist analysis of this epoch

The course of world development in our time is governed by the main contradiction of our epoch that between socialism and capitalism which affects all the other social contradictions and determines the dynamics of human society's affairs One social pole of the modern world is the world of socialism that has taken shape and is growing stronger year by year which represents the rising new socio economic formation embraces a whole system of states and has boundless historical prospects ahead of it The other pole is economically and technically developed capitalism which is in a state of general crisis and is passing through the last monopolistic stage of its development but which still retains influential positions of the world Marxist Leninists have no doubt of the final outcome of this struggle However complex and tense it will be we know with truly scientific certainty that the future lies with socialism and communism and that it is in the hands of the revolutionary vanguard of the working class

4 The Leading Force in the Fight for Socialism

A new stage of our times and new opportunities in the fight for peace national emancipation and socialism have opened before the working class and all humankind The social basis of the revolutionary movement has broadened Favourable opportunities have arisen for a number of countries to pass from capitalism to socialism without civil war But all these circumstances cannot of themselves bring victory of the revolution They are only the objective conditions for socialist transformations which can only be realised through the action of the subjective factor i.e the conscious vanguard of the revolutionary masses That vanguard is Communist and Workers Parties

Experience of the historical development of many countries and of the class struggle has convincingly demonstrated how necessary and productive the activity of Communist Parties is for social advance Being guided by Marxist Leninist theory they are lighting the road to the communist

future for nations As Leonid Brezhnev stressed in the report to the 26th Congress of the CPSU

the main thing is that Communists armed with the Marxist Leninist teaching see the essence and perspective of the processes in the world more profoundly and more correctly than anybody else and draw the right conclusions from them for their fight for the interests of the working class the working people of their countries and for democracy peace and socialism¹

Vast experience has been gained in the movement toward that goal i.e. experience of building socialism in various conditions which demonstrates both its general patterns and the variety of its concrete forms experience of defending the masses vital interests of rallying the revolutionary forces of fighting for socialism in countries at different levels of development and experience of fighting for lasting peace among nations

The Communist movement has now become a powerful political force Only under the leadership of Communists can the working class and broad masses of the working people fight successfully for their goals for socialism That is why Communist Parties pay such enormous attention to growth of their ranks and consolidation of their unity to their ideological tempering and training for the decisive battles for radical social reforms

The first organisations of the working class as we know were created above all to defend their economic rights but the economic struggle could not essentially alter the working man's condition The advanced workers therefore began more and more often to think of the need for political struggle against capitalism and the state machine that defended its interests Experience of the class struggle convinced the proletariat that it could only achieve its goals through revolutionary political organisation The resolution of the London Conference of the International Working Men's Association (1871) drafted by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels said

against this collective power of the propertied classes the working class cannot act as a class except by constituting itself into a political party distinct from and opposed to all old parties formed by the propertied classes

¹ L. I. Brezhnev *Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU to the XXVI Congress* p. 25

this constitution of the working class into a political party is indispensable in order to ensure the triumph of the Social Revolution and its ultimate end—the abolition of classes¹

Lenin developing their conclusions wrote

In its struggle for power the proletariat has no other weapon but organisation. Disunited by the rule of anarchic competition in the bourgeois world ground down by forced labour for capital constantly thrust back to the lower depths of utter destitution savagery and degeneration the proletariat can and inevitably will become an invincible force only through its ideological unification on the principles of Marxism being reinforced by the material unity of organisation which welds millions of toilers in an army of the working class²

Lenin developed the theory of the party of the proletariat in a comprehensive way as the working class's main ideological and political weapon in the fight for power and victory of socialism and communism. Under his leadership the Party of the Bolsheviks which was a model for the world of a revolutionary political organisation of the proletariat had already fourteen years after its beginnings having rallied the working class and labouring masses of the peasantry in struggle led the people of such a vast country as Russia to victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution the revolution that opened a new era in human history the era of the transition to socialism.

The mark of the proletarian party of a new type which came into being at the Second Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party in 1903 was its revolutionary character. Unlike the opportunist leaders of Social Democracy who were converting Marxism into a scholastic doctrine the Bolsheviks turned all their energy to materialising the ideas of scientific communism in revolutionary practice and to making the party a weapon for winning political power and establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat. The founding of such a party was and is a decisive condition for the transition to socialism.

Lenin's great service to the working class and all working

¹ *The General Council of the First International 1870-1871 Minutes* (Progress Publishers Moscow 1974) p 445

² V I Lenin *One Step Forward Two Steps Back Collected Works* Vol 7 1965 p 415

people not just of Russia but of the whole world was his demonstration of the need for such a party and his direct leadership of its founding and activity

From the very start his theory of the party was not confined to the specific features of Russian reality but was built and developed on a Marxian analysis of the epoch of the general laws of socio economic development and of the international Communist and working class movement That was why his theory of the theoretical political and organisational principles of the new style party is integral and indivisible Firm consistent realisation of its underlying principles and its development in relation to contemporary conditions are the dual task that Marxist Leninists are successfully coping with

What concretely are these principles?

A Leninist party is a party of revolutionary action It is distinguished by ability to correctly determine a revolutionary situation (which can mature very rapidly and unexpectedly in a country in our dynamic century) and exploit it resolutely Deep faith in victory of the working class is characteristic of Communists together with clear understanding that success is not won without careful thorough preparation and revolutionary boldness The position of cautious waiting and indecision characteristic of organisations of a right-opportunist hue is foreign to a Leninist party Such a party also does not suffer from the Leftist itch of revolutionary phrasemaking¹ is free of adventurism and is clearly conscious of the complexity and responsibility of the tasks facing it Communists master all forms of struggle are able to act (and do) in both legal and illegal conditions making use in accordance with the situation both of strikes and of the parliamentary tribune of demonstrations and election campaigns street meetings and trade union negotiations with employers subordinating all their activity to the tasks of a revolutionary restructuring of society

Communist and Workers Parties consider it exceptionally important to preserve these revolutionary qualities and develop them since only by following Lenin's traditions and being guided by revolutionary principles can Communists successfully exploit the opportunities being created today by such favourable factors as the change in the world balance of forces in favour of socialism confirmation of the principle of peaceful coexistence in the relations of states with opposing social systems and the upsurge of the anti imperialist movement

A Leninist party is one armed with advanced theory 1 e

¹ V I Lenin The Itch *Collected Works* Vol 27 1965 p 36

with scientific socialism an organisation of like minded persons united by a singleness of ideas and fighting for common ends. Lenin taught Communists to master events and not to let events master them and for that they have a powerful weapon viz Marxist Leninist theory. The party according to Lenin should untiringly make itself proficient in the complicated art of applying the general principles of Marxism to the concrete conditions of the struggle should boldly determine current tasks and defend the ultimate aims of the working class and constantly combine the fight of the proletariat and working masses with scientific socialism.

Marxist Leninist theory gives Communists the possibility of profoundly analysing and understanding the home and international situation and starting from the current situation of working out the best answers meeting the needs of the day and the general tasks of the age and also of determining how events will develop. Marxism Leninism is a powerful instrument in a party's hands. Communists are concerned to keep their great theory pure to develop and enrich it in accordance with the changing situation and to link it with the practice of the revolutionary struggle and their creative endeavour.

Communists see theoretical generalisation and interpretation of the processes and shifts taking place in the world not only as the scientific basis for making the political struggle more effective but also as a necessary means of rebuffing opportunism and revisionism ideologically in their attempts to renew but in fact distort garble dilute and emasculate the revolutionary theory of Marxism Leninism. A dogmatic approach to revolutionary theory and repetition of truths that at first glance are indisputable but in fact do not allow for the new situation in a country and the world are alien to Communists. For them theory has never been science for science's sake. Theory by being developed through generalisation of revolutionary practice itself serves this practice and is tested by it. Communists resolutely oppose any break between theory and practice and do not allow any weakening of work to inculcate scientific consciousness in the working masses.

The Marxist Leninist parties of our time see as their role always to be up to the tasks of the age deeply to understand the working people's practical needs and demands and to throw scientific light on current and future events boldly combining theory with the practice of the revolutionary struggle.

A revolutionary party according to Lenin is the conscious organised vanguard of the workers but also uniting the most advanced progressive members of other social groups who

support the position of the working class It would be a serious mistake and self deception he stressed

to forget the distinction between the vanguard and the whole of the masses gravitating towards it to forget the vanguard's constant duty of *raising* ever wider sections to its own advanced level¹

At the present stage of the revolutionary struggle the front has broadened new contingents of working people are becoming involved and representatives of various political currents and outlooks In order to exploit the opportunities for joint anti imperialist action opening before them there needs to be a strengthening of the impact of Marxist Leninist parties on the masses Communists being conscious of this are striving to march in the vanguard of the revolutionary liberation and democratic movements to draw all working people into the fight for high ideals and to spread the ideas of scientific socialism in the working class movement and among the broad masses especially among the youth are consistently defending the principles of scientific socialism and are fighting the corrupting influence of capitalist and opportunist ideology on the consciousness of the masses

A Leninist party is a party of internationalists Lenin always considered fidelity to proletarian internationalism and consistent realisation of it a criterion of a revolutionary party and a *sine qua non* of its success in the fight for socialism Proletarian solidarity he pointed out is incompatible with concessions to nationalism and jingoism while a proper combination of the national and international in a party's activity is a *sine qua non* of pursuing a truly internationalist policy Lenin's party was built as a single multinational unit and as a contingent of the world army of the proletariat The Bolsheviks always strove to decide issues of a national character in close connection with the international working class movement's international problems Lenin taught that a party isolated from the world revolutionary movement and not making use of its accumulated experience could not wage the revolutionary struggle successfully or build socialism and that it was impossible to tackle revolutionary issues in a Marxist way on the national plane out of context of the international tasks

Such are the characteristic features of a Marxist Leninist party that distinguish it in principle from all other political parties These are the features of a living constantly

¹ V I Lenin One Step Forward Two Steps Back *Collected Works* Vol 7 p 261

developing organisation of revolutionaries which (in Lenin's words) knows how

while preserving its basic type to adapt *its form* to the changing conditions to vary that *form* to meet the requirements of the moment¹

The forms and content of the activity of a Marxist Leninist party alter and develop in the various stages of the fight for socialism and in different conditions. Communists have always been distinguished by an ability to reorganise their ranks flexibly to overhaul tactical orientations and methods of practical activity in accordance with the changing conditions and needs of the fight for a revolutionary transformation of society. In their work they start from accumulated experience, draw on everything progressive and positive from the past, make a critical sweeping analysis of their activities and are not afraid to reject outmoded forms and directions of action. But the basic principles of the building and functioning of a party remain unshakeable.

Lenin's principles of building a party retain all their vitality and topicality today because, as practice has shown, Communist Parties can only be consolidated further on their basis. Marxist Leninists therefore resolutely rebuff the attempts of ideologists and various types of opportunist to distort these principles and induce Communists to reject them.

(1) Opponents of Marxism-Leninism endeavour to sap the organisational unity of Communist Parties and to provoke factional disunity. Capitalist propaganda widely advertises the liquidator (in essence) interpretations, for example, of the French renegade from Marxism, Roger Garaudy, who advises Communists to dissolve their parties and break with this very valuable gain of the working class simply on the grounds that, according to him, parties are an out-dated form of organisation which (he says) were very progressive in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries but have ceased to be so today.²

Advice of that kind is sometimes accompanied with calls to build some kind of new party differing in organisation from a Leninist one. What does it have in mind? First of all rejection of the principle of democratic centralism, the keystone of the organisation of a Communist Party. Communist Parties are advised to repudiate centralised leadership and constitutional discipline, forms of party organisation tested by

¹ V. I. Lenin, *How Vera Zasulich Demolishes Liquidationism*, *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, p. 401.

² See *Le Nouvel Observateur* 1979, 781, 123.

decades of struggle and in general everything that makes a party a solid cohesive competent efficient organisation of revolutionaries and of the workers. Communists are advised furthermore to lower the demands made on a member to open the doors of the party to everyone wanting to join and so convert it into a forum for non proletarian elements alien to the aims of the fight for socialism. What ideal of a new party is this? To call a spade a spade it is surely clear that Communist Parties are simply advised to turn themselves into amorphous reformist organisations acceptable to the capitalist class and integrated into the political structure of state monopoly capitalism i.e. into what many Social Democratic Parties have long been.

Organisational unity of the ranks of a Communist Party is one of the most important principles that makes Communists successful. It is the primary condition of a party's successful functioning. In his day Lenin estimated rejection of centralism and of party discipline within the party to be opportunism in organisational matters inseparable from opportunism in the field of programme and tactics and leading to conversion of the party from the militant leading vanguard of the working class into some sort of vague muzzy indefinite association. Marxist Leninist parties conscious of that resolutely fight both these right opportunist tendencies and the attempts of leftist elements to build a party of a conspiratorial type.

(2) Capitalist and opportunist ideologists direct their attacks against the ideological and political unity of Communist Parties actively disseminating the idea of democratic pluralism meaning the legalising of factions in the party's internal affairs and of struggle between them and recognition of the existence of various ideological trends in the party including ones alien to scientific socialism. The demand for pluralism has probably become the main banner of opportunism which is why the class enemy who has long been aware that Communists' ideological unity and fidelity to Marxism Leninism are the decisive premise for the Communist movement's success and a *sine qua non* of its existence and development grabs at this conception.

Recognition of the principle of ideological pluralism would be nothing but conversion of the party from an organisation of like minded people rallied by a single world outlook into a kind of debating club open to ideas hostile to this world outlook and limiting its class independence. Ideological anarchy is alien to a revolutionary vanguard party of the working class. Marxist Leninist ideology is rigorously scientific. And that determines both its integrity and the diversity of ideas and concepts reflecting the variety

of the world around represented in it both its consistence in defending its class principles and its full freedom of carrying out creative quests and theoretical discussions on their basis

(3) Proletarian internationalism one of the underlying principles of the affairs and activity of Communist Parties is fiercely attacked by the enemies of communism Over the whole history of Marxism Leninism nothing has perhaps been so attacked by capitalist and reformist ideologists and nothing so viciously distorted What a lot of utter nonsense anti communists have talked about it The Marxist Leninist idea of internationalism some say imposes Russian experience as the guide for all Communists others assert that proletarian internationalism is the international equivalent of the Leninist doctrine of democratic centralism ¹ Others still holding forth about the ambiguous character of proletarian internationalism conclude that it is the other side of the thesis concerning peaceful coexistence between states with differing social systems ²

The hostility that the capitalist class and reformism of all hues and colours feel toward proletarian internationalism and their striving come what may to distort its essence are easily explained For it is not just an element or aspect of scientific communism Marxism Leninism itself is nothing other than a generalisation of the international experience of the working class movement and expression of the proletariat's international interests so that it is inseparable from proletarian internationalism

In striving to modernise their fight against proletarian internationalism certain ideologists try to prove resorting to all sorts of fabrications that proletarian internationalism allegedly in present conditions contradicts the national interests of the working class of separate countries and is a survival of the past So a not very clever trick of switching concepts is played In fact however Communist Parties now being a major political force are broadening the scope of their general national tasks Furthermore the role of Communists during the fight for the vital interests of the workers as the most consistent staunchest spokesmen of the true interests of the nation is becoming more and more obvious to millions of people All the healthy forces of the nation are gradually grouping around them all who are interested both in fighting the crisis that is rending their countries through the fault of the ruling capitalist circles and in opposing impe

¹ *The New Republic* 1977 117 6/7 22

² Hans Peter Schwarz and Boris Meissner (Eds) *Entspannungspolitik in Ost und West* (Heymanns Verlag Köln 1979) S 11

rialist domination and the penetration of international corporations

All these are indisputable facts. Do they mean however as the enemies of Marxism Leninism are trying to prove that international tasks do not for that reason now play as important a role in the working class fight as purely national ones?

Needless to say if we examine the processes developing throughout the world even in its most remote corners through the prism of whether they directly affect the position of the workers in an individual enterprise or if we think in terms of a town region or country this logic inevitably leads to the conclusion that proletarian internationalism is passé and that its role has been reduced to nothing. But such logic has always been organically alien to Marxist Leninists who examine every phenomenon in all its varied connections and pay attention to the objective process of growing internationalisation in all public affairs and the gradual increase in the impact of international factors on the position in every country and on the activity of all national and social movements.

In that connection we can hardly agree with attempts to renovate proletarian internationalism to put it on a national basis and to revise certain of its tenets. Take for example the statements sometimes heard that since the composition of the revolutionary forces leading the fight against imperialism has broadened so in modern times people's solidarity therefore goes far beyond the bounds of proletarian internationalism which (it is said) needs to be replaced by a new internationalism.

It seems to me that Lenin exposed this idea in his day. When revealing the roots of the working class international positions he noted that the proletariat's economic situation had an international character.¹ The wage labour system i.e. the proletariat's place in the relations of social production and correspondingly the international community of its class interests are the main factor uniting the international working class. That is the basis of proletarian internationalism and its theoretical and practical essence.

There can be no disputing of course that the broad anti-imperialist coalition corresponds to the masses democratic aspirations and to the tasks and aims of the political struggle of the working class and working people. Furthermore it has long become reality for example in the shape of the world anti-war movement. But ask yourself what member

¹ See V. I. Lenin To Inessa Armand *Collected Works*, Vol. 35 1976 p. 247

of the anti war movement can give it such an orientation and so the necessary consistency to extirpate the very economic roots of imperialism i.e. the social foundations of expansion and militarism? Which of the members of the anti war movement can direct the fight for peace into the stream of effective actions guaranteed in a material way thanks to the socialist community and not allow it to be converted into the solidarity of philanthropic pacifists trusting simply in the attraction of their ideas of reason and goodness? Clearly only a class that is drawn into the fight for peace by economic interests and not political ones alone is suited to such a role. And that class is the working class.

The idea that rules out the significance of proletarian internationalism allegedly in the name of a broader international association of democratic forces therefore cannot in our view lead to a further broadening of international solidarity and to a raising of its effectiveness but on the contrary will lead ultimately to collapse of the world anti imperialist front.

As for Marxist Leninist parties fidelity to the principles of proletarian internationalism is not a political dogma for them but the result of a scientific understanding of its deep economic basis and of its leading role in the world association of liberation democratic and anti imperialist forces.

In spite of whoever preaches the need for a radical revision of the principle of proletarian internationalism denies the interconnection of the national and the international in the Communist movement and in all revolutionary practice the real facts on the contrary demonstrate a significant rise in the role of international solidarity and a growing dependence of the conditions and course of the struggle within any country on the world balance of forces on the activity of socialist countries on the international arena and on the advances of all the currents of the world revolutionary movement. Proletarian internationalism Leonid Brezhnev has said is

the solidarity of the working class and of the Communists in all countries in their struggle for common goals their solidarity with the struggle of national liberation and social progress the voluntary cooperation of fraternal Parties with the equality and respective independence strictly observed we think that this kind of comradely solidarity which Communists have held aloft for more than a century has lost none of its great significance to this day. It has been and remains a

formidable and tested weapon of Communist Parties and of the working class movement in general¹

The unity of the world Communist movement now finds reflection in broad systematic links between parties in collective theoretical activity in bilateral and multilateral meetings and in joint political actions on various issues of the fight for peace democracy and socialism Marxist Leninists are striving to develop all these forms of the international interaction of Communists and strengthen unity of the world Communist movement by consistently observing the principles of the equality independence and self reliance of Communist Parties

In our epoch of the transition to socialism the Communist movement is uniting all the currents of the world revolution As the revolutionary process develops the role of Communists is increasing The responsibility of each party for the progress of the common revolutionary cause for observance of all the norms and standards of party life and activity is growing And Communists are boldly and courageously taking on this responsibility

There have been quite a few parties that called themselves labour or worker or socialist or advanced or progressive and so on but which often remained isolated from the people in their practical activity and sometimes acted in defiance of their interests Not having adopted a revolutionary Marxian ideology and outlook they could not escape from the vicious circle of petty bourgeois ideas of the patterns of social development and of the historical role of the working class Only revolutionary labour parties parties of a new type armed with Marxist Leninist theory and closely linked with the people can and do successfully perform the job of organising and politically educating the masses and leading their fight to transform society

The whole history of the Communist movement is evidence of the extension of its influence among the masses of the working people The following figures indicate how its ranks have grown In October 1917 there were hardly more than 400 000 Communists in the world In 1928 there were 1 600 000 and today there are 60 million There are also other but no less important indicators In a little more than six decades Communists have come to power in 15 countries in which more than 1000 million people live Parties of Communists were operating in nearly 80 non socialist countries at the end of the 1970s and tens of millions of voters

¹ *For Peace Security Cooperation and Social Progress in Europe*
pp 22 23

supported them at the polls. Communists are playing a more and more active role in many national and international trade union, youth and women's organisations and other bodies.

The Communist movement following the road of revolutionary struggle has become the most influential political force of modern times. This is expressed in the following:

(1) Communist Parties are now not only an opposition force fighting to end the outlived exploiter system but are putting the theory of scientific socialism into practice in building a new society during which they have demonstrated that they can successfully guide the conscious creativity of the masses of the people.

(2) Communists are marching in the vanguard of the fight of the working people in capitalist countries and all the facts of the varied reality of these countries confirm the correctness of their estimate of capitalist society and of the road of struggle that they call on the workers to follow and along which they are daily leading the masses. In many countries they have made considerable advances in rallying the workers around programmes of anti-monopoly struggle and their role as the militant vanguard of the working class has risen.

(3) Communists are actively influencing the national liberation movement. Their activity in developing countries is an important factor in the fight against neocolonialism and imperialism to consolidate national independence and social progress. The Communists of the countries of the socialist community and developed capitalist countries are having a favourable effect as well on the social processes in those developing countries where Communist Parties have not yet been founded.

History has laid no light burden on Communists. In socialist countries they are the trail blazers, are leading the building of a society such as history has not known and are advancing toward communism through their creative development of Marxist-Leninist theory, taking into account the deep shifts and changes that are taking place in the world. But it must not be forgotten that socialism is still faced with many internal difficulties in several countries and with fierce attacks from forces defending the old capitalist system and is also subjected to immense economic, military and ideological pressure from imperialism.

Discrimination in economic and political affairs, prison and often physical reprisals are and have been the lot of Communists in many capitalist countries. Thousands of Communists and other democrats and revolutionaries have been the victims of bloody repression and terror. Even in the most democratic capitalist countries Communists are discrimi-

nated against in one way or another. The secret police keep the activities of Communist Parties under surveillance and keep special files on Communists and other progressive people. Everywhere in the capitalist world Communist Parties are subjected to the constant pressure of capitalist propaganda which pours out a flood of lying inventions and fabrications about them, falsifying their activity, blackening the ideals and aims of their struggle and the practice of building the new society in the countries of existing socialism.

In developing countries Communists are coping with complex problems of politically activating the masses of the people, raising the role of the proletariat, rallying all patriotic, progressive and democratic forces and establishing co-operation with them, because only in that way can the problems of national and social development be resolved. The Communist Parties of these countries are bending their efforts to creating broad democratic associations that will fight for important economic and political demands, namely the overthrow of dictatorial regimes, democratisation of public affairs, the carrying out of agrarian reforms and curbing of the aggressiveness of imperialism and internal reaction.

It was the Communists who at the birth of the first workers and peasants state in 1917 proclaimed to the world their intention to put an end to the war unleashed by the imperialists and promulgated a decree on peace. It is Communists who today are in the vanguard of the fight of all progressive forces and social movements for relaxation of international tension and triumph of Lenin's principle of peaceful coexistence and for the radical vital interests of nations.

The growth of Communists' influence on world social development is due above all to their being the leading force in the revolutionary struggle for socialism, with which mankind's future is linked. The strength of Communists, whatever the national and historical conditions in which they act, is their revolutionism and their ability to apply the theory of scientific socialism creatively in practice, to organise the masses and to convince the workers of the soundness of the ideas of Marx, Engels and Lenin.

Conclusions

The contemporary epoch is one of struggle of two systems, viz. socialism and capitalism. Every political issue is ultimately a derivative of the main patterns of its development, patterns that determine the strategy and tactics of the revolutionary movement.

Our epoch is distinguished by an unusual wealth of economic social and political factors that are all one way or another linked together and subject to the effect of one source of development the main contradiction of the epoch

The outlook for socialism for all mankind is becoming more and more clear and indisputable The main lines of revolutionary development and roads of struggle for the transformation of society are more and more distinctly defined The interaction of the various streams and currents of the world liberation process moreover is not only multiplying their strength but is also creating an immense variety of economic social and political conditions for revolutionary transformations in separate countries

The working class is at the centre of our epoch and is the main driving force of social reforms Its vanguard—the working class of the countries of the socialist community—is the most mature organised and united contingent of the international working-class movement which is paving the way for all peoples to socialism and communism

The Communist movement the most influential political force of modern times is providing leadership for the masses at all stages of the fight for socialism rallying and organising them on the principles of scientific socialism Only Communists are capable of heading this fight and leading it to victory

In the great historical battle that the Communist movement and the international working class are fighting against such experienced treacherous enemy disposing of an enormous arsenal of counter revolutionary means as imperialism the decisive advantage in the final count is with those who are able to take the historical initiative to display consciousness of high moral and political duty to humankind and historical responsibility for its future and—the main point—who are already able today to pose and tackle in deeds and not in words the cardinal issues of our times connected with the fate of peace and progress

History long ago and irrevocably rendered its verdict Life itself has convincingly demonstrated that capitalism is incapable of such initiative that it is helpless in face of the historical responsibility to guarantee peace and the progress of mankind and that the final word will be with the social system to whose triumph throughout the world Communists dedicate their fight and struggle

Chapter III

THE LAWS OF REVOLUTION AND REVOLUTIONARY CREATIVITY

The theory of revolution created by Marx Engels and Lenin and developed by the modern Communist movement reveals the patterns of economic and social development and the logic of political struggle and on that basis defines the road to transforming the old social system and creating a new one making conscious deliberate use of the laws of its development By rejecting subjectivism and voluntarism revolutionary theory at the same time opens up the broadest vistas for revolutionary creativity

1 Objective Factors

The socialist revolution combines the action of the most varied factors—objective ones arising from the development of the capitalist system's economic social and political contradictions and subjective ones embodied in the conscious revolutionary activity of the masses of the people and their Communist vanguard The maturing of the objective preconditions of the revolution is determined by regularities not governed by men's will In that sense revolution can never be forecast it cannot be foretold it comes of itself ¹ But a theoretical analysis of the socio-economic aspects of social development helps us foresee the character and main features of the coming revolution its driving forces and forms of revolutionary struggle The strategy and tactics of Communist and Workers Parties are developed from such an analysis Failure to allow for the conditions in which the revolutionary movement is developing and ignoring of the historical patterns doom the revolution to defeat as experience has shown

The initial tenet of Marxism Leninism when analysing the

¹ V I Lenin Speech in Polytechnical Museum August 23 1918 *Collected Works* Vol 28 1977 p 83

economic conditions of any social revolution is that the material preconditions of the new society are created within the old. That conclusion also holds in regard to the socialist revolution. Lenin considered state monopoly capitalism the full material precondition of socialism. The more developed the economic basis of capitalism is, and the higher the degree of social labour, the broader are the objective opportunities for socialist reforms; the smaller are the funds and forces that the socialist state has to spend on building the material and technical basis of the new society, and the faster the creation of socialist relations of production, and the superstructure corresponding to them, will proceed.

The material and organisational premises of the socialist revolution taking shape within capitalism can be divided into the following main groups:

(1) *The physical material framework of the new running of the economy and a concentration and centralisation of the means of production permitting a regulated labour process.* In economically developed capitalist countries the concentration and monopolisation of production, which expresses the social character of labour, has become exceptionally developed. The elite of the industrial oligarchy of the United States, for example, consists of ten or twelve supermonopolies with an annual turnover of more than \$10 billion, producing a quarter of the output of the 500 biggest American corporations. A similar high degree of monopolisation is found in West Germany among the member countries of the European Economic Community.

State monopoly capitalism, by vastly socialising production and centralising its management, aggravates the main contradiction of the capitalist system to the extreme, i.e. the contradiction between the social character of production and the private mode of appropriation. This process not only prepares the material and organisational preconditions for replacing capitalism by socialism, but also makes more and more obvious to people the unnaturalness of the position whereby production complexes that sometimes serve a whole number of countries are the private property of a handful of monopolists. The need to replace capitalism by a socialist system is becoming more and more urgent.

(2) *Development of the army of wage labour, which becomes more and more prepared socially to establish socialist relations of production as the social character of production becomes more marked.*

(3) *The organisational and management structure of production, which embraces complexes of institutions directing and controlling the production process.* Entrepreneurs are forced by competition to put production on a planned basis within

monopoly firms and to regulate the technological and management processes in accordance with the needs of scientific and technical progress. Because of the mounting importance of these matters we must examine them in more detail.

Under modern state monopoly capitalism the scientific and technological revolution is accelerating maturing of the material and organisational preconditions for the transition to socialism and increasing their significance in society's economic affairs. Scientific and technical progress is increasing the tempos of the socialising of production on both the national and the international level (the rise of international monopolies of a new type of inter state regulation of external economic relations and of economic integration). It is promoting the introduction of elements of planning and programming into the capitalist economy but that does not diminish the dominant role of the private property system of business management. State interference is being converted more and more during the scientific and technological revolution from the emergency measures it used to be into an organic integral part of the machinery of capitalist production. The qualitative changes are also affecting the main production force the workers. The exploitation of working people is increasing while the application of the latest scientific and technical advances in production is working against the workers throwing millions of people out of jobs.

One often finds it said in the works of Western sociologists that automation of production will lead very nearly to disappearance of the working class in industrially developed countries by the end of this century and correspondingly to a dying away of its revolutionary potential.

What can one say about that? The numbers of the hard core of the proletariat i.e. primarily of the industrial workers are declining relatively in developed capitalist countries and in some cases absolutely. But Western sociologists and futurologists in their haste to proclaim the end of the working class and at the same time to bury its revolutionary role leave out of account the main fact namely that the mass of wage earners subject to the direct exploitation of monopoly capital is at the same time steadily growing.

As we have already remarked essential changes are taking place in the structure of the working class exploited by capital under the impact of the scientific and technological revolution. On the one hand the proportion of skilled and semi skilled workers in the total mass of the proletariat is steadily growing though not uniformly everywhere. On the other hand the intelligentsia mainly the scientific and technical intelligentsia is becoming a very important source

of surplus value for the capitalist class as science becomes a direct productive force i.e. are being subjected to direct exploitation. An increasingly significant proportion of rank and file engineers, scientific workers and technicians who now for the most part already perform executive functions are objectively comparable with the skilled technically trained stratum of the workers in other words they are being converted into a component part of the modern proletariat and are reinforcing its ranks. White-collar workers are converging on the proletariat in both their economic and social conditions and are adopting its forms of struggle for their interests. Wage earners whose interests are at bottom hostile to those of the capitalist class are a social milieu that is united by a striving to end capitalist relations of production and carry out socialist reforms.

The process of moulding the material and technical preconditions of the socialist revolution under modern capitalism is thus not only not becoming weaker but is on the contrary even being intensified.

Social reformists and right wing revisionists consider maturity of the material and technical basis of capitalism to be the main condition for carrying out socialist reforms so that the latter can consequently be made by an evolutionary path through a peaceful gradual growing over of capitalism into socialism. The left critics of Marxism Leninism on the contrary think that the maturity of these material preconditions is a sufficient basis for beginning the revolution at any moment without taking any account whatsoever of the other necessary conditions.

If when evaluating how mature a society is for socialist reforms we start only with their industrial technical preconditions the issue of the existence or absence of the economic conditions for the transition to socialism simply becomes unresolvable. For who can establish what volume of production what proportions between industry agriculture and the service sphere what level of development of state monopoly capitalism will provide the economic conditions necessary for the transition to socialism? If the matter is posed only on that plane any answer will inevitably be arbitrary voluntarism.

In reality bearing in mind the objective economic degree of ripeness for socialism its time had come (on a world historical scale) when the capitalist formation entered its final phase i.e. imperialism. Any opinion on whether a given society is ripe in its economic development for socialist transformation must necessarily be formed by clarifying the character depth and sharpness of the class political national and other antagonisms growing within it on the soil of the main contradiction of capitalism (to spell it out

once more the contradiction between labour and capital")

The economic relations of socialism moreover because of their sharp difference in principle from those of exploiter formations cannot be created within the old society. Only the material and technical preconditions of the revolution mature within capitalism but not ready made socialist relations of production. Only the proletarian authority arising through political victory of the revolution is able to create the new socialist relations. The socialist revolution consequently is not completed by the new class's seizure of power but continues until the complete abolition of exploitation and elimination of the remnants of capitalist society. That is the reason why the proletariat's revolutionary fight against the capitalist class (the highest form of which is the socialist revolution) is so acute. And that is why there is no possibility of a planned evolutionary transition from capitalism to socialism and no voluntary yielding of their positions by the ruling classes.

The flimsiness of the passive wait and see position that social reformists fight for is particularly obvious today when the socialist countries are giving the world revolutionary movement many-sided support. The opportunity to begin revolutionary transformations before the material basis of socialism has been fully laid is becoming more and more likely as is demonstrated by the example of the many countries that have taken the road of socialist development.

The historical rightness of Lenin's convinced of the vast organising force of the new workers and peasants government and the inexhaustible creative possibilities of the revolutionary masses has been brilliantly confirmed not just in the USSR but also during the victorious revolutions that have taken place since World War II in Europe and Asia. The experience of building socialism in Cuba too is evidence of the justice of Lenin's conception: before the revolution it was a country with an average level of capitalist development deformed moreover by features inherent in the development of a country that was in essence a semi-colony of the United States.

We must also point out the immense importance of Lenin's conception of the possibility of economically backward countries moving toward socialism bypassing the stage of capitalism a possibility that developed after the rise of socialism as a state formation. That such a road of a socialist orientation (or non-capitalist road of development) has proved possible means that today with the new conditions created by the existence of a world socialist system it has become possible to make reforms in these countries that bring them directly into the world process of the passage to socialism. A

non-capitalist road is possible for their peoples primarily because the objective conditions lacking in the first stages are compensated as it were by firm international ties with the countries of the world socialist community though (needless to say) one cannot deny the great significance of the subjective factor

A far reaching social and political crisis i.e. a revolutionary situation is a most important objective factor in the socialist revolution. The tactics of the revolutionary movement begin with the need to define the moment and features of the development of this crisis correctly and to exploit it. All socialist revolutions have begun in revolutionary situations.

Lenin named three main criteria of a revolutionary situation

(1) when it is impossible for the ruling classes to maintain their rule without any change when there is a crisis in one form or another among the upper classes a crisis in the policy of the ruling class leading to a fissure through which the discontent and indignation of the oppressed classes burst forth. For a revolution to take place it is usually insufficient for the lower classes not to want to live in the old way it is also necessary that the upper classes should be unable to live in the old way. (2) when the suffering and want of the oppressed classes have grown more acute than usual. (3) when as a consequence of the above causes there is a considerable increase in the activity of the masses who uncomplainingly allow themselves to be robbed in peace time but in turbulent times are drawn both by all the circumstances of the crisis *and by the upper classes themselves* into independent historical action¹

This proposition of Lenin's still holds today. Time and again a position is created in different capitalist countries that is more or less close to a revolutionary situation. It used to be linked in the past as a rule with grave economic crises, bloody repressions by the ruling classes, wars or famine but now the possibilities of its occurrence are much broader and have become more varied because of the involved nature of socio-political relations and the rise of new contradictions affecting various strata of society.

Given economic difficulties, state control does not help the capitalist economy much and there is a substantial drop in financial resources for pursuing a policy of social manoeuvring and a limitation of the possibilities of capitalist reformism.

¹ V. I. Lenin. The Collapse of the Second International. *Collected Works* Vol. 21 pp. 213-14.

Growth of unemployment a fall in the public's purchasing capacity limitation of the civil rights and freedoms of big groups of the population mounting political instability a moral crisis of the ruling circles mistakes and miscalculations in foreign policy merging of the economic monetary and energy crises environmental pollution—such are just some of the serious factors exacerbating the political situation internally and leading to clashes between the workers and the authorities and to conflicts that can grow into a revolutionary situation

The aggravation of the social contradictions in the capitalist world reveals the flimsiness of the statements spread by opportunist ideologists about a decline in the working class's economic interest in revolution

The thesis about the unconditional favourableness from the standpoint of the interests of the revolution of the want and poverty of the masses is not a Marxian idea Lenin took his stand primarily on the thesis developed by Marx and Engels about the proletariat's mounting *insecurity of existence*¹ (which is not equivalent to a growth of poverty) caused by its position as an exploited class of capitalist society lacking property when comparing the level of satisfaction of the material needs of one kind or another of today's working class and working masses as a whole at the beginning of the twentieth century we must allow for the different levels of development of the social productive forces in these periods and also consequently for the different possibilities objectively offered man by society But the workers striving for social reforms stems precisely from the contradiction between the possibilities of meeting their needs that they are aware of and their actual living conditions It is also important to remember moreover that the improvement in the material well being of the proletariat compared with the past is neutralised by the development of new unsatisfied needs created primarily by the altered objective conditions of its functioning as an exploited labour force These needs are not an indicator of its bourgeoisification (as Leftists keep saying) but are a necessary condition of the functioning of labour force under the scientific and technological revolution are compensation for loss in connection with the intensification of exploitation which is taking ever new forms

There is thus with the development of capitalism a replacement of certain more or less satisfied needs by other as a rule higher new ones And failure to satisfy them plays the same revolutionising role as failure to satisfy the old ones

¹ Frederick Engels A Critique of the Draft Social Democratic Programme of 1891 In Karl Marx and Frederick Engels *Selected Works* Vol 3 p 431

A recognition of sorts of this is the statement of George Schultz former US Secretary of the Treasury that an economist's lag can be a politician's catastrophe¹

The workers mounting fight for their economic interests and more and more their political ones is confirmation that class intuition does not lead capitalist ideologists astray

For a proper appraisal of the political position in capitalist countries we have to allow for the whole aggregate of economic social ideological and moral factors operating in them and for all the circumstances and features of the class struggle Only then can we correctly determine the trends of development of each concrete situation

That is the position from which fraternal parties approach both leftist and right wing extremes in dealing with this matter

There is a common idea of late on the one hand whose adherents claim that there is no hurry to push the proletariat's active struggle for socialism with the forms of capitalist democracy now established that the proletariat can secure a change in social development and open the road to socialism by establishing its hegemony as well as in capitalist society itself in the democratic people's movement Concretely the point (they say) is that there will be a step by step passing of the economy the state machinery and the mass media into the control of the working class and that the same process will extend to the educational system the armed forces and even the church In sum the transition to socialism it is said can be solved peacefully without a revolutionary situation of any kind by a national referendum which will be very nearly an empty formality since its results (they say) will be predetermined by the gradual establishing of working-class hegemony in society

What is confused in arguments of this kind? Not of course that their advocates call for daily efforts to consolidate the position of the working class in all the cells and links of the social and state structure What is confused is that they assume the need to wait patiently for a situation when the proletariat will gradually become the dominant class and be able to take society along an evolutionary road to socialism without revolutionary reforms and transformations and without a decisive change in its class nature

On the other hand Communists also find the idea unacceptable that a revolutionary situation need not necessarily in present conditions of a broadened base of anti monopoly struggle take acute crisis forms The assumption that a peaceful quiet imperceptible revolutionary situation is

¹ *The Economist* 1979 273 7113 41

possible (which is not confirmed by the experience of history) in fact opens the door for including a non revolutionary state of society in the category of a revolutionary situation in other words opens the door to arbitrary voluntarist estimates and actions Attempts to outpace the course of events and to carry out a revolution in the absence of a revolutionary situation are doomed to defeat and can only lead to temporary precarious successes A fundamentally different approach is characteristic of scientific socialism A revolutionary situation is governed by objective circumstances even though of course a big role is played in preparing it and bringing it about by the purposeful activity of the masses and their vanguard the revolutionary party of the working class without which a revolutionary situation cannot be converted into a revolution

In the early 1970s the attempts of leftist elements in Chile to outrun events and speed up the pace of revolutionary reforms in the country faced the national movement with particularly harmful consequences When the Popular Unity government headed by Salvador Allende took office ultra left groups demanded an immediate transition to socialist revolution rejected any kind of compromise or alliance even with the patriotic minded military seized small and middling industrial enterprises and agricultural holdings including ones that did not belong to the big landowners As Luis Corvalan General Secretary of the Chilean Communist Party said later

These attitudes and similar ones drove broad sectors of the middle classes who were ideologically linked on the other hand with the bourgeoisie into the camp of counter revolution ¹

As a result an alignment of forces built up in the fight for power that was unfavourable for Popular Unity As Rene Castillo member of the national leadership of the Communist Party of Chile has written

the Chilean experience has reaffirmed that ultra Leftism is a boon for imperialism and reaction which assiduously cultivates it as a means of defeating the people The opportunist essence of the Peking Leftists too stood out in Chile in all its ugly nakedness—even in the eyes of the petty bourgeois pseudo revolutionists The Leftists ended up by extending a hand of friendship to the fascist putschists ²

¹ *El Pleno de agosto de 1977 del Comité Central del Partido Comunista de Chile* (Ediciones Colo-Colo Mexico 1978) p 35

² Rene Castillo In *One Thousand Days of Revolution CP Chile Leaders on Lessons of the Events in Chile* (Peace and Socialism International Publishers Prague 1978) p 19

A revolutionary situation is thus part of the involved set of conditions of social development that is an objective factor of the revolution and which reflects various aspects of the material and spiritual affairs of society—from the economy to the psychology of individual social groups

2 Subjective Conditions

The rise of a revolutionary situation in a country is evidence that capitalism has been gripped in it by unresolvable contradictions and that an objective social need has arisen to replace it by a socialist system. A revolutionary crisis is manifested in a tense struggle of various class forces and in a marked sharpening of social contradictions, disturbance of the economic mechanisms and so on, but that does not mean automatic collapse of capitalism. It can gradually emerge from the crisis by intensifying exploitation of the workers, implementing reactionary measures and suppressing the popular movement and by means of various demagogic promises and unimportant sopas and so on.

The historical duty of the revolutionary forces is to exploit a revolutionary situation so as to abolish the capitalist system and convert the situation into a revolution. For that, as Lenin stressed, subjective factors are necessary, i.e.

the ability of the revolutionary *class* to take revolutionary mass action *strong* enough to break (or dislocate) the old government which never, not even in a period of crises, falls unless it is toppled.¹

This capacity of the revolutionary class comes from years of experience of its fight for its own interests under the leadership of Communists. Communist Parties see it as their job not just to determine the correct road of reforms and transformations but also to convince the masses of their correctness and to organise them.

The significance of the subjective factor is heightened in modern conditions when the objective conditions for the transition to socialism have matured in practice in all developed capitalist countries and when the emancipated countries have obtained new chances to develop along a non-capitalist road.

The growing role of the subjective factor is due in particular to the fact that an acute political situation can now arise that will grow over into a revolutionary situation not

¹ V. I. Lenin, *The Collapse of the Second International*, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 214.

because of certain extraordinary events (wars economic crises etc) but because of the rallying and consolidation of the working class and democratic movement which make concrete revolutionary demands and a rise in the masses consciousness and organisation In the final count objective factors obviously underlie an upsurge of the masses capable of becoming the main impulse for the rise of a revolutionary crisis but whether they are drawn into movement largely depends on the policy of the revolutionary party as we have already stressed

An intensification of the subjective factor due to growth of the workers consciousness consolidation of their revolutionary vanguard and the mounting influence of socialist countries can promote the formation of certain objective preconditions of the socialist revolution

An important aspect of the strategy of Marxist Leninist parties is that they do not adapt themselves to an already given situation but take the initiative allowing for the world balance of power in strict accordance with the changing state of social and political affairs and faithfully reflecting the radical interests of the broad masses of the people and pursue an active revolutionary policy

The subject factor of the revolution is thus not rigidly and sluggishly linked with the concrete objective conditions It has a certain independence and initiative in relation to them In the context of more or less mature objective conditions it has adequate possibilities for broad manoeuvring and constructive exploitation of the situation building up When it can affect the development of the objective conditions to some extent it can even more assume that they can change and so prepare the masses for that

Communists by no means always wait for an ideal revolutionary situation mature in all respects In the concrete conditions of socio-economic development some elements of the revolutionary process develop faster than others There may be favourable external political factors for example before all the elements of a revolutionary crisis are displayed or all strata of the workers fully understand the need for revolutionary changes and the ruling circles finally lose the power to rule in the old way¹ The job of the revolutionary vanguard is also to determine correctly whether the conditions correspond to the tasks of successful struggle for victory of the revolution

The incompleteness of some elements of a revolutionary

¹ The international situation that built up as a result of the defeat of fascism during World War II for instance promoted a quickening of the revolutionary process in certain countries in Eastern Europe

situation needless to say puts its stamp on the course of the revolutionary process and the tactics of the Communist movement. During the revolution Communists inevitably have to put the finishing touches to and complete many things deepening and consolidating the results of each victory and each success. Revolution is a serious business. It calls for a scientific approach. Revolution, Lenin said, is a profound difficult and complex science.¹ What did he mean? First of all that it is necessary to approach each theoretical and practical issue of the revolution from the standpoint of the interests of the working class and the aims of its struggle. Leninism teaches furthermore and practice demonstrates that only that revolutionary action is effective whose initiative comes from a clear conception of its fitness for the purpose and its possible consequences that allows for the degree of support of the masses that is based on an objective estimate of the concrete conditions and features of the current moment in short that assumes a scientific attitude to revolution. But it is not only that. Communists' revolutionary skill also plays an enormous role.

Leninism while equipping revolutionaries with a scientific conception of the objective pattern of the struggle requires them to exploit all the possibilities created by given concrete conditions in a creative way and with initiative and to take decisions boldly in a situation however involved it may be. Leninism teaches that no knowledge of scientific socialism however complete can lead the workers to victory without the ability on the basis of science to make a revolution in practice.

So strengthening of the role of the subjective factor determined by growth of the workers' consciousness consolidation of their revolutionary vanguard and the growing influence of socialist countries can promote the forming of certain objective preconditions of a socialist revolution. There is a dialectical conversion of the subjective factor into an objective one.

At the same time we must again stress that growth of the role of the subjective factor in no way means a lowering of the significance of the objective laws of the rise of revolutions. In order to refute this Leftists sometimes appeal to the experience of the Cuban revolution claiming that subjective and even personal factors decided everything there. Such groundless assertions came from a mechanical isolation of the objective from the subjective an incomprehension of their dialectics. The Cuban revolution. Fidel Castro has remarked

¹ V I Lenin. Extraordinary Fourth All Russia Congress of Soviets. March 14-16 1918. *Collected Works* Vol 27 p 198.

was not a matter of providence a political and social miracle remote from the reality of the modern world and ideas It was the result of conscious consistent activity in accordance with the historical laws of human society

Maturity of the subjective factor is a main condition for realising the objective possibilities of a revolution

It is not every revolutionary situation that gives rise to a revolution the revolution arises only out of a situation in which the above mentioned objective changes are accompanied by a subjective change (Lenin said) ¹

In this connection we must stress that raising of the role of the subjective factor today and of the fighting capacity and influence of the vanguard party among the masses is still governed by the fact that without conscious revolutionary action and leadership of the masses by a Marxist Leninist party there is a real danger of a spontaneous orgy of anarchy and demoralisation of society as a result of an urgent but unexploited revolutionary situation And that leads to success of the forces of counter revolution and reaction to the establishing—at least for a certain period—of anti popular terrorist regimes and a throwing back of society and ends in immense sacrifices by the working class and its party

At the turn into the 1980s the leading circles of imperialism adopted a line hostile to detente a line of pushing the arms race leading to increase in the war danger The militarist trends in US policy have found expression in new long term arms programmes the building of new military bases far outside the United States especially in the Middle East and the Indian Ocean the forming of a rapid deployment force really an instrument of military intervention At the beginning of the 1980s 480 700 American servicemen were stationed abroad according to the Western press ² International imperialism is giving financial and military support to anti popular dictatorships and reactionary forces in many countries which all cannot help affecting the conditions of the revolutionary struggle and the action of the subjective factor of the revolution

The ideological struggle is becoming more and more important in our time as regards activity of the subjective factor By utilising the mass media the capitalist class is striving to halt growth of the masses class consciousness to

¹ V I Lenin The Collapse of the Second International *Collected Works*, Vol 21 p 214

² *US News & World Report*, 1979 87 27 46

twist revolutionary ideas to push revolutionary parties toward opportunism and to spread a capitalist outlook among the working people. The capitalist class's ideological sabotage against the working class has a well-organised character directed by state agencies on which immense sums are being spent.

The forms of capitalist propaganda are also becoming more and more sophisticated and in it a growing role is given to information that imposes an interpretation of events on listeners and readers in a very effective laconic form favourable to the ruling circles and completely based on a capitalist world outlook. Such information has one aim viz to foster hatred of socialist countries and communist ideas. The new methods of capitalist propaganda include an endeavour to affect people's consciousness by ideological forms in which their capitalist essence is better and more sophisticatedly camouflaged. Capitalist propaganda is especially active on the plane of philosophy, art, literature and morality. As Leonid Brezhnev said at the 26th Congress of the CPSU, the main thing for the imperialists now in the sharpening ideological struggle is to turn people against socialism.¹

Characteristic changes are also taking place in the realm of political propaganda. The direct anti-communist treatment of public opinion is paralleled by the preaching of 'good socialism' freed of elements of dictatorship, the Communist Party and so on.

So a proper estimate of the foreign affairs factor is particularly important when choosing the time and determining the paths of development of a revolution.

Sometimes, especially in circles that identify themselves with the labour movement, doubt is thrown of the competence of the states of the socialist community to help countries taking the road of national independence and social progress or defending the gains won by the people's struggle against the intrigues of internal and external reaction. These views in fact identify internationalist solidarity and interference in the internal affairs of other countries and assume that every nation should wage its fight against imperialism and reaction by itself, relying exclusively on its own forces and should on no account appeal for aid and support to its natural allies, the socialist countries.

So we get it that local reaction in any country nurturing anti-popular counter-revolutionary plans has the right to appeal for help to the forces of international imperialism and

¹ See L. I. Brezhnev, *Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU to the XXVI Congress*, p. 14.

hegemony while democratic circles have no right to appeal to their allies for aid in the anti imperialist struggle To put it mildly that strange logic condemns the masses of the people and the revolutionary forces to isolation and in certain conditions to defeat since local and international reaction as all the experience of historical development shows manifest class solidarity and always overtly or covertly resort to attempts to export counter revolution

The left opportunist position too has nothing in common with the Marxist Leninist principle of class solidarity Leftist theorists who attack the Marxist Leninist estimate of the objective and subjective factors of revolution make a push from outside the centre of gravity of revolution They consider the revolutionary forces to have the best chances to attack the power of capital in war conditions and think that war weakens the position of capitalism In support of their point they cite the fact that nearly all socialist revolutions have been associated with wars It is indicative that Leftists conceptions almost wholly coincide in this (as in many other cases) with the attack from the right on the theory of scientific socialism and the practice of Communist and Workers Parties

But such statements are unsound The wars in whose conditions revolutions occurred are evidence solely of the sharpening of the contradictions between capitalist countries (often undoubtedly linked with acute internal contradictions) but in no way indicate a maturing of the objective and subjective factors of revolutionary transformations On the contrary the democratic forces chances for action are sharply limited during wars while nationalist frenzy and jingoism which complicate class demarcation are intensified

The preconditions of revolution stem from the objective laws of social affairs from the situation created by the struggle of classes and the actions of the working masses of a country and by the might of world socialism To regard war as a necessary condition for victory of the revolution is to reduce the role of the working class and the masses of the working people of a country to nought and to encourage spread of the anti-communists lie about the export of revolution and the plots of international communism For capitalist ideologists while striving to defame and slander the Soviet Union and other socialist countries and to present them as aggressors at the same time endeavour to justify their own pseudo scientific statements about the unshakability of capitalism and about the threat to it coming from outside from socialist countries rather than from internal forces

Marxist Leninists clearly and distinctly declare that revolu

tion is a business of the masses of the people that only by starting from revolutionary experience of the struggle can the working class and working people of each country prepare for and carry through the revolution That is why Marxist Leninists have always attacked the theory of nudging the revolution along all the more so by means of war As Marx said to Engels With the best intentions in the world the English cannot accomplish this [an agrarian revolution—K Z] for the Irish ¹ Lenin criticising the left wing Communists ² who wanted to speed up the course of history by a revolutionary war said

Perhaps the authors believe that the interests of the world revolution require that it should be *given a push* and that such a push can be given only by war never by peace which might give the people the impression that imperialism was being legitimised ? Such a theory would be completely at variance with Marxism for Marxism has always opposed pushing revolutions which develop with the growing acuteness of the class antagonisms that engender revolutions ³

Thus when we speak of subjective factors we have in mind primarily Communists capacity to make a theoretical analysis of the existing balance of class forces and their ability to see the main trends of the development of those forces and on that basis to pursue a revolutionary policy with initiative corresponding to the needs of the moment and directed to the victory of socialism

The Marxist Leninist theory of the subjective factors of revolution reflects the deep dialectical creative character of the revolutionary process It shows that the activity of proletarian parties and revolutionary leaderships can affect the revolution decisively At the same time because it is linked with the theory of objective factors it defines the strict boundaries and possibilities of this influence and guards against subjective exaggeration of the role of parties and individuals in the revolutionary process The theory of subjective factors moreover does not provide any obligatory recipes but requires that the revolutionary movement's varied experience be taken constantly into account and demands ability to analyse the concrete situation rapidly and distinctly

¹ Letter of Karl Marx to Frederick Engels 30 November 1867 In Marx and Engels *Ireland and the Irish Question* (Progress Publishers 1978) p 158

The left wing Communists were an opposition grouping among the Bolsheviks in 1918 (Bukharin Radek Pyatakov and others)

³ V I Lenin Strange and Monstrous *Collected Works*, Vol 27 pp 71 72

and on that basis to work out and perfect the tactics and strategy of the revolutionary struggle

3 The General Patterns

The problem of the general and specific features of the transition to socialism in various countries has a place of exceptional importance in Marxism Leninism. The fundamental propositions about it were already developed by Marx and Engels. Their views were based on a dialectical conception of the ties between the general and the specific in social processes, deep study of the concrete conditions of the development of the capitalist system as a whole and in separate countries, and of the struggle of the working class. Describing the Marxian approach to this question, Engels wrote

It makes no pretensions to dogmatic orthodoxy and doctrinaire leadership, and it provides a common action plan, which, while freely adaptable to the varied conditions of each nation and each locality, is nevertheless everywhere the same in its features, and so gives a guarantee of uniform views and general agreement on the means to the common goal to be employed.¹

Lenin developed and concretised the theory of the general and specific features of the transition to socialism. For that he took it as his point of departure that

while the development of world history as a whole follows general laws, it is by no means precluded, but on the contrary presumed, that certain periods of development may display peculiarities in either the form or the sequence of this development.²

Marxist-Leninist parties also attach great importance in our day to the relation of the general and the specific in the transition to socialism. Why? Because this is a key issue for Communists: identification of the current and future tasks of the revolutionary struggle. A fruitful exchange of experience and effective mutual help between the separate contingents of the world Communist movement rest on a proper understanding of the general patterns and differences in the economic, political and ideological conditions of the transition period. In their struggle, Leonid Brezhnev has stressed

Communists proceed from the general laws governing the development of the revolution and the building of

¹ Friedrich Engels, *Die europäischen Arbeiter in Jahre 1877*. In: Karl Marx/Friedrich Engels, *Werke*, Vol. 19 (Dietz Verlag, Berlin 1962), S. 124.

² V. I. Lenin, *Our Revolution*, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 477.

socialism and communism A deep understanding of these general laws and reliance on them in combination with a creative approach and with consideration for the concrete conditions in each separate country have been and remain an inalienable feature of a Marxist Leninist ¹

Let us now touch on the content of the main patterns of the transition to socialism which operate in close interconnection in the main (viz the political economic and cultural) spheres of society's affairs

In the realm of politics the general patterns include the following leadership of the masses by the working class and its vanguard party carrying out of the socialist revolution and establishment of the power of the working class in alliance with other strata of the working people defence of the revolutionary gains abolition of national oppression and the establishment of equality and fraternal friendship between nations proletarian internationalism

In the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* Marx and Engels wrote of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class ² The proletariat's strength is not only its revolutionism consciousness and organisation and the constant growth of its ranks but also the community of its interests with the vital interests of all working people The masses therefore follow the working class and that multiplies its strength ten times over and makes victory possible even in countries where it does not constitute a majority of the population The socio-economic mechanism that puts the working class in a position of class hegemony operates according to laws that cannot be characterised by elementary quantitative proportions because as Lenin stressed

The strength of the proletariat in any capitalist country is far greater than the proportion it represents of the total population That is because the proletariat economically dominates the centre and nerve of the entire economic system of capitalism and also because the proletariat expresses economically and politically the real interests of the overwhelming majority of the working people under capitalism ³

The fundamental condition guaranteeing the working class's

¹ L I Brezhnev *Report of the CPSU Central Committee XXVth Congress of the CPSU* p 37

² Karl Marx and Frederick Engels *Manifesto of the Communist Party* In Karl Marx Frederick Engels *Collected Works*, Vol 6 p 494

³ V I Lenin *The Constituent Assembly Elections and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat* *Collected Works*, Vol 30 p 274

victory over the capitalists is its revolutionary conquest of political power. That is also the main issue on which a firm line is drawn between Marxist Leninists and social reformists.

Both Marxist Leninist theory and the whole experience of world history demonstrate that there cannot be a fundamental shift in the class essence of society through smooth evolution. Such a change in fact presupposes a break in evolutionary development – a leap – i.e. a revolution. In Lenin's words:

capitalism creates its own grave digger. itself creates the elements of a new system yet at the same time without a leap these individual elements change nothing in the general state of affairs.¹

Starting from that Marxist Leninist parties say in their programmes and political practice that the turn in social development that opens the road to socialism can only come from active political struggle of the working class and working people – a struggle moreover fought to the ousting of the capitalist class from state power.

Marxism Leninism teaches that social revolution is a necessary pattern of the succession of socio-economic formations because the old system can only be abolished and replaced by a new one and state power passed from the class that has outlived its time to the progressive one by revolution. In that respect a socialist revolution in no way differs from a capitalist one. But only the socialist revolution abolishes exploiting classes and all exploitation of man by man for the first time in history. That is why it means a sweeping radical social change such as history has never known.

The fundamental issue of a proletarian revolution is that of the dictatorship of the proletariat. In his *Critique of the Gotha Programme* Karl Marx said:

Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but the *revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*.

Lenin stressed this idea more than once considering it impossible to emancipate humankind from the yoke of capital without a dictatorship of the proletariat and that this point would be of the greatest significance for all countries.

The most important general feature of the transition from capitalism to socialism is the establishing of the dictatorship

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Differences in the European Labour Movement*, *Collected Works*, Vol. 16, 1977, p. 348.

² Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 26.

of the proletariat without it it is impossible either to build or develop socialism. Socialist relations of production can only be firmly established by taking the principal means of production into social ownership. Capitalists understandably will never voluntarily consent to that.

Historical experience teaches that the capitalist class which has concentrated mills and factories, railways and communications, commerce and finance in its hands, i.e. all the key positions of the economy and which possesses state power including the machinery of coercion (i.e. the police, army, prisons) and the means of ideological pressure, fights stubbornly and fiercely for its sacred property, political dominance and privileged position in society. In order to beat the exploiters the proletariat has to establish its own dictatorship, i.e. authority based on the broad masses of the working people. This authority has the job of defending the working class against both internal and external enemies. Successful coping with this task is a *sine que non* ensuring victory and development of the new social system. As Lenin stressed, it is impossible to defeat and root out capitalism without suppressing the resistance of the exploiters who for a fairly long period will inevitably try to overthrow the hated rule of the poor.¹

Two characteristic features of the behaviour of the overthrown capitalist class and of the political forces serving them strike one.

One is their striving to overcome their internal contradictions and close their ranks against the revolutionary proletariat's onslaught. The more victorious we are, Lenin commented, the more the capitalist exploiters learn to unite and the more determined their onslaught.² The second feature is the capitalists' transition to the fiercest, most frantic, crudely violent actions against the new constitutional authority. They not only moreover become offenders against revolutionary legality but insolently break the standards of law, public order, constitutionality and democracy that they themselves had previously established. Utilising the positions it still holds in society, reaction organises mutinies, conspiracies and economic and political sabotage and does not stop at terror and wrecking if the situation presents itself and unleashing of civil war. Taken together, all that makes the capitalist class a most dangerous enemy of the revolution after its toppling from power, even though as a class it remains an insignificant minority in society. And that explains

¹ V. I. Lenin, *The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government*, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 264.

² V. I. Lenin, *Speech at the Ninth Congress of the R.C.P. (B)*, March 29-April 5, 1920, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 450.

why class struggle [as Marx wrote] necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat ¹

The ordinary everyday banal objections of capitalist and reformist ideologists to the dictatorship of the proletariat consist as we know in treating the term dictatorship itself in an abstractly ethical sense and not in a class one. It goes like this: dictatorship means gross violence, brute force and coercion, flouting of and trampling on the rights and dignity of people and a nation. Other capitalist ideologists allege that with the establishment of a dictatorship of the proletariat there is restriction of the rights of all strata of the population, including the working people and not just of the capitalist class.

For Marxist Leninists it is obvious that creation of the dictatorship of the proletariat does not in itself contain any prescriptions at all for the new revolutionary authority for coping with the problems facing it solely by methods of direct coercion, administrative compulsion, etc. as the opponents of scientific socialism try to present it.

In treating the dictatorship of the proletariat as a necessary weapon for establishing and consolidating the authority of the ruling class, we must clearly see the difference between its essence and dictatorial practice. This practice, i.e. the concrete expressions of the dominance of the working class in society and the methods of exercising it to defend its gains and interests, can be very different and can include the mildest non-dictatorial, non-coercive measures. It was not for nothing that Lenin repeatedly stressed that the essence of proletarian dictatorship is not in force alone, or even mainly in force ² and that the dictatorship of the proletariat is not only the use of force against the exploiters, and not even mainly the use of force ³.

As for Communists, subjective aspirations, they have constantly looked for opportunities to direct the victorious proletariat's fight against counter-revolution into a channel of economic and political struggle rather than of armed battles. The history of the October Revolution and of the socialist revolutions in other countries has left a mass of evidence confirming Communists striving to fight their opponents by political means and to utilise all opportunities to convert the policy of the dictatorship of the proletariat and coercion into government of the country through better organisation and

¹ Karl Marx, Letter to Joseph Weydemeyer in New York, London, March 5, 1852. In Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 64.

² V. I. Lenin, Greetings to the Hungarian Workers, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 388.

³ V. I. Lenin, A Great Beginning, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 419.

education of the masses and by drawing them into the leadership of society. But for all that revolutionary practice demonstrates that it is impossible to pass to socialism without the dictatorship of the proletariat i.e. without the working class's possession of constitutional authority.¹

Now let us try and answer the question of the future of the institutions of constitutional authority and the scrapping of the capitalist state machinery.

In certain circles close to the labour movement in the West there is an idea that Lenin's views on scrapping the state machinery should be reviewed in modern conditions because this machinery has now undergone changes (they say) that can be exploited in the transition to socialism.

When they say that the state machinery of capitalism is better than it used to be and is adapted to directing economically socialised production they are of course correct. In fact why smash the machinery of management if it works well and can serve the new society? Why set up new machinery if the old apparatus is highly qualified and capable of serving the cause of the working class and masses of the working people? Lenin as we know wrote about the undesirability of smashing the technical administrative apparatus of the capitalist state and public sector of the economy and about drawing on the old specialists. He not only wrote about it but did everything he could to carry this policy out in practice yet at the same time he considered that the capitalist state machinery

must be wrested from the capitalists' control, the capitalists and the wires they pull must be *cut off*, *lopped off*, *chopped away* from this apparatus; it must be *subordinated* to the proletarian Soviets; it must be expanded, made more comprehensive and nation wide.²

It follows that neither preservation of the old forms of the state set up nor changing them has in itself any significance from the standpoint of a real class solution of the issue of power. The whole point is what class interests any institution of the state administration or any link in the political system

¹ The Communist and Workers Parties of the European people's democracies incidentally sincerely sought to avoid tough forms of class struggle during the transition to socialism. Some of them even proposed to dispense with it and put that into their published resolutions. But the laws of revolution had their way. And the need to repulse rabidly resistant reaction in these countries, the real tasks of the socialist reorganisation of society and the cold war launched by imperialism required the revolutionary authority to display its class, proletarian nature clearly.

² V. I. Lenin, 'Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?' *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, 1964, p. 106.

is the bearer of and whose class interests it defends and who it continues to serve (the old system or the new) This was what Lenin meant by demolition of the capitalist state machinery When it is not smashed during the revolution that can create immense hazards for it and even lead to defeat

The revolutionary practice of the twentieth century has not yielded a single example (and cannot) of a real transition to socialism given retention of the capitalist state machinery i.e. the system of political power built up by the capitalist class and adapted to serving its interests All people's socialist revolutions both the ones that won and those that were defeated have invariably confirmed that constitutional authority is that sector of public affairs in which class relations absolutely do not yield to an evolutionary approach The history of the world movement from capitalism to socialism does not say a single word in support of the reformist idea that purely capitalist power can be converted into purely proletarian power by a gradual change in the party composition of the government

Marxist Leninist parties consider that a revolutionary solution of the question of power is an indispensable and decisive condition of victory of the revolution Leonid Brezhnev substantiating this point of view which has been confirmed by all socialist revolutions stressed that

the question of power continues to be the main issue in a revolution It is either the power of the working class acting in alliance with all the working people or the power of the bourgeoisie There is no third possibility¹

In the total pattern of the transition from capitalism to socialism in the political field an important place is taken by the abolition of national oppression and by the establishing of equality and fraternal friendship between nations and implementing of the principles of proletarian internationalism

Marxism Leninism teaches that the national question is one of the issues of the socialist revolution It can only be really tackled during the socialist revolution and the building of socialism because as Lenin pointed out it is impossible to abolish national (or any other political) oppression under capitalism² The struggle to cope with the national question is therefore an important factor in the revolution's development and the building of new social relations

Lenin gave a clear description of the principles of

¹ L. I. Brezhnev *The Great October Revolution and Mankind's Progress*, p. 19

² V. I. Lenin *The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up* Collected Works, Vol. 22 p. 325

Communists policy on the national question and indicated the main lines of the fight to deal with it

The Communist Party as the avowed champion of the proletarian struggle to overthrow the bourgeois yoke must base its policy in the national question too not on abstract and formal principles but first on a precise appraisal of the specific historical situation and primarily of economic conditions second on a clear distinction between the interests of the oppressed classes of working and exploited people and the general concept of national interests as a whole which implies the interests of the ruling class third on an equally clear distinction between the oppressed dependent and subject nations and the oppressing exploiting and sovereign nations in order to counter the bourgeois democratic lies that play down this colonial and financial enslavement of the vast majority of the world's population by an insignificant minority of the richest and advanced capitalist countries a feature characteristic of the era of finance capital and imperialism¹

The subsequent implementing of these principles in the policy of the Bolshevik Party and its resolute support of the emancipation struggle of the oppressed nations and nationalities of czarist Russia led to the uniting of all their working people in a single revolutionary process which was a most important factor in the victory of socialism Consolidation of the socialist system in turn became the foundation on which the national question was dealt with in the USSR and relations of fraternal friendship of the people and international unity were developed

Successful coping with the national question as a pattern of the transition to socialism is of world historical importance since this issue remains more or less acute in most of the countries of the world Events of recent years have shown that even in those industrially developed countries in which the national question seemed to have been settled back in the last century it is now being sorely aggravated The existence of these acute issues is objectively raising the role and responsibility of the working class i.e. the force internationalist in its very nature without which there cannot be a consistently democratic solution of the national question

In developing countries Communists are fighting local and foreign reaction with the aim of rallying the left national forces in revolutionary democratic anti imperialist move

¹ V I Lenin Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and the Colonial Question *Collected Works* Vol 31 p 145

ments and are striving for social reforms that will open the road to socialism

Those are some of the main political patterns of the transition of various countries to socialism

The next group of general problems concern the economic sphere and include the abolition of capitalist property and establishing of social ownership of the principal means of production

All class social formations prior to the socialist had a single type of basis i.e. private property in the means of production which was preserved during and after the revolution. But in the socialist revolution there is a replacing of one form of ownership private property by another form social ownership. Engels put it this way

As soon as our Party has power it has simply to expropriate the big landed proprietors the same as the industrial manufacturers¹

Such expropriation is necessary because private property in the main instruments and means of production is the source of exploitation of the working people of the poverty of the masses of predatory wars and of national and racial oppression and because its continued existence is incompatible with development of the new social system. Replacement of the private form of ownership by the social is an objectively necessary condition and general pattern of the socialist revolution

A favourite trick of the class enemies of Marxism Leninism and of reformist ideologists is to assert that the abolition of private property is a forcible sequestration from above directed against all owners of private property without exception big middling and small. The opponents of Marxism Leninism also impute attempts to Communists to implant socialism by the total abolition of private property equating this alleged implanting and Communists' real aspiration to open the road to socialism through democratic anti-monopoly anti-oligarchic or anti-feudal reforms

What can one say about these allegations?

Let us take as an example how the issue of replacing the private form of property by social ownership was tackled after the October Revolution in Russia. There is no need to demonstrate that the Bolsheviks had clearly set themselves the ultimate goal of a socialist organisation of the economy through socialisation of the means of production. But Lenin

¹ Friedrich Engels Die Bauernfrage in Frankreich und Deutschland In: Karl Marx/Friedrich Engels Werke, Bd. 22 (Dietz Verlag Berlin 1974) S. 504-05

resolutely rejected revolutionist calls for the immediate introduction of socialism and full socialisation of private property. On the eve of the Revolution he wrote

Many things will become clearer *after* the basic measures of the new type have been carried out *after* the nationalisation of banks *after* the introduction of workers' control experience will tell us *a lot more* for it will be the experience of millions the experience in building a new system of economy with the conscious participation of millions. But to inject into the programme an overdose of detail is premature and may become harmful by tying our hands with petty matters.¹

Subsequently he stressed that the Party had after the revolution carried out a more gradual transition to the new social and economic relations adapting itself as much as possible one may say to the conditions then prevailing and without any special scrapping.²

Thus there was no shadow of an intention to saddle the working people with socialism in the economic policy of the Communist Party which had just come to power on the contrary the carrying out of socialist reforms was directly dependent on the experience of the working class of all people of labour.

Lenin taking as his starting point that it is impossible to decree socialism and that the economy cannot be overhauled and rebuilt in a day developed a number of proposals of principle that on the whole remain topical today. What was decisive during revolutionary changes in the initial stage he stressed was not the scope of the economy covered by them but the ability to take the main key points the commanding heights of the economy under control and convert them into public property which would make it possible to decide the economy's development in a new direction in the interests of the working people and toward the goals of building a new system.

Marxist Leninists thus distinguish at least three different aspects in the business of socialising the means of production each one of which plays a major role in revolutionary practice (1) There is the change in the forms of property which has been shown to be a law of social development (2) There is the consistent but cautious circumspect carrying out of this change with no dangerous running ahead through

¹ V I Lenin Revision of the Party Programme *Collected Works* Vol 26 p. 173

² V I Lenin Seventh Moscow Gubernia Conference of the Russian Communist Party October 29-31 1921 *Collected Works*, Vol 33 pp 89-91

holding the commanding heights of the economy (3) There is the need to co ordinate the actual measures with the actual circumstances political as well as economic

These tenets of Marxist Leninist theory also determine the sole correct point of view from which the historical practice of socialising the property of capitalist industrialists must be considered The characteristic features of this practice as they were displayed in post revolutionary Russia had the qualities of repeatability and objective regularity as the experience of subsequent revolutions has shown

Things are different with agriculture In most capitalist countries fragmented separate peasant farms predominate numerically so that there comes to be a contradiction after victory of the proletarian revolution in any country between large scale industry which has become socialist as a result of socialisation or nationalisation and small peasant farming Our job as regards the smallholders (Engels said) is first of all to join their private farms and property up co operatively ¹

Lenin too believed that co operation is the best way to resolve the problem of property Under the dictatorship of the proletariat the co operative society is the form of transition from separate fragmented farms to large scale production units or collective farms that is acceptable to understandable by and profitable to the peasants

Given social ownership of the means of production given the class victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie (he wrote) the system of civilised co-operators is the system of socialism ²

The business of drawing the peasantry to socialism will be eased needless to say in those countries where a powerful co-operative movement has already developed under capitalism

Marx Engels and Lenin not only pointed out the way to socialist transformation of agriculture but also showed the methods for tackling it stressing that while the big landowners and capitalist industrialists can be expropriated such a measure is impermissible as regards peasants and artisans With them methods of concrete agitation and conviction must be employed Otherwise the peasantry may split away from the working class which would do irreparable harm to the building of socialism and could lead to collapse of the dictatorship of the proletariat

They also pointed out that the socialist revolution is not just one in the realm of socio-political and economic relations but

¹ See Friedrich Engels *Op cit* p 499

² V I Lenin *On Co-operation Collected Works* Vol 33 p 471

is also a revolution in the realm of ideology. The general patterns in this sphere are manifested concretely in the following

(1) There is a process during which the working class and the masses of the working people become aware that they can only free themselves from the toils of exploitation by replacing the power of the capitalist class by that of the proletariat and by building a socialist society. The masses of the people do not reach that conclusion immediately. Under capitalism and survival of its leftovers even the working class cannot be wholly won over to socialism.

While starting from a scientific historical materialist explanation of the world historical role of the working class, Marxist Leninists examine the state of the proletarian movement concretely in each country, distinguish among the proletariat groups of worker aristocracy and strata that are under the influence to some extent or other of frankly capitalist or reformist ideology and policies. There are such groups and strata in developing countries as well as in the industrially developed capitalist countries. Communists are fully aware that there is no pure proletariat in general expressing its class interest with ideal fullness and cannot be.

That is why it is still possible to spread various kinds of petty bourgeois ideas and prejudices among the working class. The working class in capitalist society furthermore is constantly (and cannot help being) subjected not without trace to the influence of the imperialist ideology spread by the mass media.

A necessary preliminary condition for winning the whole working class over to socialism is the establishment of its own class power. Only under the influence of socialist ideas spread by a proletarian party and through the influence of life itself do the masses become convinced of the need to fight for socialism.

(2) A revolution in the realm of ideology presupposes a revolution in people's attitude to work, property, morals, habits, psychology, etc. It means emancipation of the masses consciousness from the influence of capitalist ideology and conversion of Marxism Leninism into the general theoretical scientific basis of all forms of social consciousness.

(3) Work with the intelligentsia plays an extremely important role and also the formation even before the revolution of cadres of intellectuals committed to the working class and the cause of socialism and drawing of the most progressive members of the intelligentsia into membership of the leading bodies of the new power. Lenin considered the intelligentsia an integral extremely important component of the leading

nucleus of the political army of the revolution pointing out that

the masses will never learn to conduct the political struggle until we help *to train* leaders for this struggle both from among the enlightened workers and from among the intellectuals ¹

All these matters have to be tackled to some extent or other and in one form or another and will be decided in all countries during their transition to socialism

(4) A *sine qua non* of victory of the socialist revolution is leadership by a Marxist Leninist party Without such a party no socio-political economic or spiritual transformations can be made Lenin taught that

without a party of iron that has been tempered in the struggle without a party enjoying the confidence of all honest people in the class in question a party capable of watching and influencing the mood of the masses a struggle cannot be waged successfully ²

In fact a Communist Party embodies knowledge of all the patterns of the transition to socialism and practical application of them

The fraternal parties that have experience of building socialism in their countries stress the need to stick strictly to the general patterns of this transition

Fidel Castro the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba pointed out some years ago

The Cuban revolution has its own difficulties It has taken place far away from the socialist camp and near the United States of America But it is not a political miracle It is the result of the consistent application of the principles of Marxism Leninism in the revolutionary struggle in the preparation and waging of this struggle the result of the masses support and of the struggle carried out together with the masses which has made it possible to achieve victory and subsequently to consolidate this victory ³

The experience of defeated revolutions also indicates the need to be consistently guided by the general patterns of the

¹ V I Lenin What Is to Be Done? *Collected Works* Vol 5 1975 p 500

² V I Lenin Left Wing Communism—an Infantile Disorder *Collected Works* Vol 31 pp 44-45

³ Fidel Castro *The Future Lies with Internationalism* (Politizdat Moscow 1973) p 319 (in Russian)

socialist revolution In this connection Luis Corvalan has written

Whatever the specific features of the Chilean revolution—and like any revolution it has many—not one of the fundamental theses of Marxism Leninism can be placed in doubt in the light of this experience On the contrary our experience confirms them A deep going and thorough analysis of the Chilean process as a whole indicates that the general laws of revolution remain valid The successes we achieved were due rather to the application of these laws and our failures to their underestimation These outweighed any successes or miscalculations in assessing the specific features which of course must not be underestimated either ¹

The general patterns and features of the socialist revolution thus rest on objective trends of social development inherent in all countries irrespective of their specific features Observation of these patterns decides the success of the labour movement fighting for socialism

4 The Various Roads to Socialism

The fact that there are general patterns by no means implies that revolutions will follow one and the same plan in all countries and be as like as two peas Marx and Engels resolutely rejected that view In a letter to Bebel Engels said that it would be stupid to try and give the movement in all countries a single form ² Marxism Leninism teaches that the revolution while having one and the same essence and one and the same content is developing in different countries in different forms and at different tempos (and it cannot be otherwise) ³

Lenin taught Communists to allow for the specific features of the development of their countries when working out their strategy and tactics writing

Marx's theory is to investigate and explain the evolution of the economic system of certain countries and its application to Russia can be only the investigation of Russian production relations and their evolution employing the established practices of the

¹ *One Thousand Days of Revolution CP Chile Leaders on Lessons of the Events in Chile* p 146

² Engels and August Bebel in Berlin London 19 Nov 92 In Karl Marx/Friedrich Engels *Werke* Bd 38 (Dietz Verlag Berlin 1966) S 518

³ V I Lenin Letter to American Workers *Collected Works* Vol 28 p 74

*materialist method and of theoretical political economy*¹

As he stressed more than once the community of tactics of the Communists of various countries does not mean wiping out diversity or abolishing national differences but an application of their main principles such as would alter them correctly in particulars and adapt them correctly to national and other differences. Even trusts and banks, Lenin said while equally inevitable in the capitalist development of society, are not identical in their concrete form in various countries under modern imperialism. Political forms in capitalist countries furthermore are not identical in spite of their basic uniformity.

The same variety will manifest itself also in the path mankind will follow from the imperialism of today to the socialist revolution of tomorrow²

This fundamental proposition of Lenin's would seem to have a clear bearing on the question of the diversity of socialist revolutions in different countries. Nevertheless capitalist and reformist ideologists continue to allege that Marxist Leninists recognise specific national differences only in words but in practice stress the deep similarity which denies this specific character.

What the opponents of Marxism Leninism prefer to ignore here (or rather want to ignore) is the dialectic of the general and particular in the fight for socialism disclosed by it. Lenin being profoundly conscious of this dialectic showed that nationally specific features are only a manifestation of the basic content of the revolutionary process. The main determinants however are its common patterns. That in fact is what he had in mind when he said that it is the Russian model that reveals to *all* countries something—and something highly significant—of their near and inevitable future³.

The commonness of the laws of the socialist revolution is due in the first place to the fact that the capitalist system which it is called upon to overthrow is everywhere fundamentally one and the same. Capitalism always has been and remains at bottom an exploiter-oppressor system irrespec-

¹ V. I. Lenin, *What the Friends of the People Are and How They Fight the Social Democrats*, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, pp. 266-67.

² V. I. Lenin, *A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism*, *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, 1964, p. 69.

³ V. I. Lenin, *Left wing Communism—an Infantile Disorder*, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 22.

tive of a country's level of development history or geographical position. That is why the patterns of revolutions aimed at abolishing it cannot help being one and the same in essence. For the same reason the diverse forms of socialist revolutions alter nothing in their deep content.

The revolutionary dialectic finds expression in the line consistently followed by Marxist Leninist parties when working out their own strategy and tactics guided by a common theory and at the same time in accordance with concrete local circumstances.

Such is the position of Marxist Leninists on the dialectical relation of the general and specific features of socialist revolutions. Let us now consider what moments determine the specific features of the masses' struggle for power in various countries.

As we have already noted the development of various countries is uneven under capitalism. That is why even when there is a socialist revolution at one and the same time in several countries it happens at a different economic political and cultural level in them. Each country in particular has its own political constitutional system a differently established balance of class forces and relationship between classes and so on. In some countries the proletariat is relatively united and organised in others it suffers from splits in the labour movement.

The capitalist class too is not identically organised in different countries in some it has greater strength relies on a stronger police apparatus disposes of adequate means for flirting with the working class but in others its forces may be considerably undermined and its resistance weakened so that it is forced to make one concession after another to the people. Finally the peasantry the urban petty bourgeoisie the intelligentsia and various groups of the capitalist class play a varying role in the class struggle because of the special features of their country's historical development. National traditions the psychological cast of the public etc are also different in various countries all of which cannot help putting its stamp on the forms and methods of the working class's fight for socialism.

Proper allowance for a country's economic position is of great importance when deciding the concrete roads of the class struggle. Lenin stressed that they could not be the same in countries with a highly developed industry and those with a backward industry in countries with large scale farming and those with small scale agriculture.

The transition from capitalism to socialism is conceivable in different forms depending upon whether big

capitalist or small production relations predominate in the country¹

The constructive role of the popular masses is a most important factor conditioning the variety of the forms of transition to socialism. As the real moulders of history they introduce much that is new into the forms and methods of class struggle. It is impossible to foresee all that in advance but one must allow for it.

Finally the diversity of the forms of the fight for socialism in a country also depends. Lenin noted on the international situation and on international proletarian solidarity.

Tactics he wrote must be based on a sober and strictly objective appraisal of *all* the class forces of a particular state (and of the states that surround it and of all states the world over) as well as of the experience of revolutionary movements².

How are the specific features and diversity of socialist revolutions displayed in practice? Their manifestations consist primarily in the following:

(a) in various ways of establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat for example by employing non peaceful means and armed insurrection or peaceful forms of struggle making use in particular of parliament

(b) in various forms of establishing constitutional authority and class alliances

(c) in various forms of replacing private ownership by social public ownership abolishing exploiter classes and so on

(d) in different periods for carrying out reforms of one kind or another in various areas of public affairs

In the report of the Central Committee to the 26th Congress of the CPSU Leonid Brezhnev said a propos of the various roads of victorious revolutions:

There had been armed struggle and peaceful forms of passage to the new social system there had been a rapid coming to power of the labouring classes and processes that had dragged out in time. In some countries the revolution had to defend itself against foreign intervention others had been spared of any outside invasion³.

¹ V. I. Lenin Tenth Congress of the R C P (B) March 8-16 1921 *Collected Works* Vol. 32 p. 233

² V. I. Lenin Left wing Communism—an Infantile Disorder *Collected Works*, Vol. 31 p. 63

³ L. I. Brezhnev *Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU to the XXVI Congress* pp. 23-24

A revolution taking place in accordance with the general patterns operating on an international scale thus develops via special nationally and historically conditioned forms and in special conditions is affected by specific unique phenomena traditions and so on. The strength of Marxism Leninism as a scientific theory of social development is that it organically combines rigorous knowledge of the general laws with scrupulous analysis of all the peculiarities of the historical situation in which the revolution is occurring. Any repudiation of the general patterns leads to revisionism in theory and unprincipled wavering and shilly shallying in practice. Ignoring of the specific features of the historical situation leads to sectarianism and weakening of the revolutionary movement.

A proper scientific approach to the issues of the relation of the general and the particular in the revolutionary process is a precondition of Communists' successful activity.

5 The Role of Historical Experience

Knowledge of the general laws of the revolution and of the specific character of their manifestation is enormously important for developing a correct strategy and tactics of revolutionary struggle but only when this knowledge is based on concrete historical experience. It is impossible without taking that experience into account to tackle any major issue of the theory and practice of revolution. That is true in particular as regards problems of the transition to socialism. The correct choice of the forms of the struggle for resolving these problems is unthinkable without studying the experience of the Communists. Otherwise mistakes are unavoidable. Only study of historical experience enables us to make a generalised analysis of a concrete situation and to examine it from the standpoint of the general patterns of transition to socialism.

It is necessary to study concrete experience in order to understand the patterns of social development. They do not remain frozen but alter as society develops. Revolutionary theory and even more such a part of it as the theory of the transition to socialism therefore cannot get along without constant study of the historical experience of the struggle and without constantly going back to known patterns on the basis of new knowledge and new discoveries.

Historical practice has fully confirmed the Marxist Leninist thesis of the variety of the roads and forms of the transition to socialism and the possible peculiarities of the new society's features in any one country owing to its cultural and

historical traditions and other factors. But it has just as obviously confirmed that historical progress and the succession of social formations are governed by tendencies working with iron necessity¹ that the patterns of the transition to socialism are always displayed in their own way in the concrete conditions and that one can no more ignore them than other objective laws. Now when the scientific ideal of Marxist Leninists has been converted into reality in many countries the concept of socialism itself has become a truly theoretical generalisation because as Marx said

the most general abstractions arise on the whole only when concrete development is most profuse so that a specific quality is seen to be common to many phenomena or common to all. Then it is no longer perceived solely in a particular form²

And it is now that the main features characterising socialism as a new system and a special socio-economic formation differing from the historically preceding social formations have become most clear cut.

Can the objective laws of the socialist revolution that have thus been disclosed both in theory and in practice be ignored without falling into voluntarism? Can the significance of the concrete historical experience in which the operation of these laws is embodied be rejected without doing substantial harm to the cause of the revolution? Of course they cannot. And Marxist Leninists build their whole political strategy on awareness of them and allowance for them on the basis of a thorough allowing for accumulated experience. Subjectively of course in other cases they would otherwise prefer modes of action not so obtruded by the relentless forces of history. But the choice of these conditions as historical practice witnesses is always limited by objective circumstances which inevitably prevail over subjective desires.

Another important feature is that it is impossible without studying the experience of history to train and educate the army of the revolution and to work out slogans for the struggle for power that are clear and acceptable to the people. The Bolsheviks well aware of the general patterns of the fight for socialism did not call on the masses with abstract theoretical appeals but put forward concrete slogans understood by the ordinary person, worker and soldier. Knowledge of the history of revolutionary struggle helped Lenin's party

¹ See Karl Marx *Capital* Vol I Translated by Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling (Progress Publishers Moscow 1978) p 19

² Karl Marx *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (Progress Publishers Moscow 1978) p 210

to find the right answers to such extremely important matters as how to talk to the masses and what tasks to put to them on the eve of the revolution and after its triumph

Study of the past and clarification of certain of its patterns by no means imply recognition of a need to behave in everything as was done previously. Revolutionaries as we know always have to operate in situations that one can quite justifiably say are peculiar and unrepeatable in another place and at another time. Marxist Leninists therefore consider it impermissible to make any mechanical identification whatsoever of the conditions of the fight for socialism in the past and present and as we have already stressed consider any suggestions that the revolutionary experience can serve as a ready made model to be copied and blindly imitated to be unsound. At the same time ignorance of the past and inability to utilise a weapon in the struggle that has been tested in various conditions by previous generations of revolutionaries and even more to repeat the mistakes they committed when blazing unexplored paths are by no means to be numbered among revolutionaries' achievements.

A scornful attitude to what has been done won and tested by generations of revolutionary fighters furthermore is fraught with serious failures in the political struggle. It is not without reason that folk say: If you fire at the past from a pistol the future will shoot at you from a cannon.

The revolutionary history of the twentieth century is developing on the basis of laws discovered by Marx, Engels and Lenin. The deep link of the times in revolutionaries' world practice understood in this sense obviously also requires us to conclude that principled continuity is needed in both their theoretical ideological positions and in their use of the experience of the fight for socialism accumulated by whole generations of revolutionary fighters and Communists of various countries.

The world has come a long way from the social political and ideological frontiers where it was when Marx and Engels converted socialism from a utopia into a science demonstrating that the historical movement of society is governed by development of the production and economic relations prevailing in it. The world has altered greatly too compared with the days when Lenin demonstrated in theory and practice what the proletariat's revolutionary policy is capable of accomplishing when on the one hand it is based on the objective social laws of socio-economic development and on the other hand fully develops its constructive energy and does not exhaust it within the constraints of a mistaken one-sidedly conceived economic determinism. The world will march further and further forward. The forms and methods of

the working class's struggle have altered and will continue to alter. The modern working class itself has become different. And essential changes have taken place in the conditions of its struggle. But the class essence of this fight has remained as it was and cannot help doing so. The principal fundamental tasks whose tackling during revolutionary social transformations alone can give this revolution a socialist character have not in the least altered.

In his day Lenin said, characterising the consistency and wholeness of the philosophy of Marxism, that you could not eliminate one basic premise from it or one essential part without departing from objective truth, without falling a prey to bourgeois reactionary falsehood.¹ The same can be said with full justification today about both Marxism-Leninism—the sole integral revolutionary science and ideology of the international working class movement—and the practice of the world proletariat and its many-sided experience gathered in the course of putting scientific socialism into practice as the theory and programme of the working class movement. This experience has a complete undiluted character and it is impossible to remove one component from it irrespective of whether it is a matter of the experience of victorious development of the struggle or of defeat of the revolution or of the experience gathered by a small party or a big one.

Lenin said that a Communist Party can only work out a scientific strategy and tactics of the revolutionary struggle when it makes allowance for past experience, both the experience, moreover, of its own country and the activity of its revolutionary masses and its own activity and the historical experience of other countries, parties and revolutionary peoples and of other contingents of the international Communist movement. He gave striking examples of this analysis of the historical experience of the political activity of other parties, other revolutions, other people's movements and other countries. While fighting for victory of the revolution in Russia, Lenin kept *au fait* with the problems of the movement in all other capitalist countries and constantly had his eye on the political and social shifts in the affairs of the peoples of the colonial world. Being a great revolutionary and scientist, he thought on the scale of the whole planet and of world history.

Lenin demanded all-round allowance for the special features of the development of each country and categorically condemned attempts to copy concrete models of revolutionary action mechanically and thoughtlessly to endorse everything

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, Collected Works, Vol. 14, 1977, p. 326.

done earlier by revolutionaries. Furthermore, he helped Communists in other countries to understand the specific and unique in the revolutionary movement of Russia. At the same time, he sharply criticised those who wanted to begin the revolution without allowing for its general patterns and principles, tried and tested by practice, seeing in them nothing else than a proneness to nationalist moods, an incapacity to rise to a clear understanding of the world historic essence of the laws of the class struggle and to an awareness of the truth that the general course of the proletarian revolution is the same throughout the world.¹

This approach of his to analysis of the historical experience of his own country and others, and of world history, enabled him to appraise events boldly even while they were developing, and to point out their main trends correctly. It was this that helped him grasp historical experience profoundly, separate the necessary from the chance, fight mistakes and attempts to pass the chance or narrowly national or limited off as a manifestation of some sort of general pattern, and saddle one's narrow experience onto the international Communist movement.

When analysing historical experience, Lenin always examined it on a broad social plane. And study of the trends characteristic of the class struggle on all continents and in dozens of countries that differed greatly in the scale and level of their development was most important to him for developing the strategy and tactics of the revolution.

He paid special attention to analysing and generalising the experience of the direct revolutionary practice of the working class and its party. He devoted much work to generalising the experience of the bourgeois democratic revolutions of the imperialist period, and above all of the people's revolution that the Russian revolution of 1905-7 became. He found many important new features in it, and showed its difference from bourgeois revolutions. He was able to bring out not only its specific conditions but also the general patterns, and to demonstrate their significance for succeeding revolutionary actions. Even then his writings contained an analysis of the actions of the working class in Western Europe and of the national liberation struggle in Asian countries stimulated by the 1905-7 revolution.

He also made a deep analysis of the Russian revolutions of February and October 1917, and of their driving forces, specific conditions, and so on. By demonstrating that the socialist revolution in Russia was the objective result of social

¹ V. I. Lenin. Speech at the First Congress of the Communist International, March 2-6, 1919. *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 470.

development and at the same time taking into account the rich experience of the social actions triggered off by it in a number of countries in Europe and Asia he made a new analysis of the general patterns that must underlie future socialist revolutions. And now with the powerful growth of the working class and Communist movement and the creation of real opportunities for peaceful development of the revolution in many capitalist countries, we see the colossal significance of his analysis of the Russian revolutions of 1917.

On the first anniversary of the October Revolution Lenin said that study of the experience of the first year of the existence and activity of the Soviet state and the party was of great significance. The work of the party that had seized power that was leading the activity of the millions of the working class and peasantry and waging a struggle for the intelligentsia for the carrying through of a cultural revolution and transformation in the field of economic, political and national relations contained signs not only of national specific features but also of general features and patterns that must be taken into account without fail by fraternal contingents preparing to make a socialist revolution. The experience of the revolutionary transformations in Russia he pointed out would introduce many essential corrections into Marxists' ideas on the course of these changes itself and their main tasks and directions. Marxism he wrote provides knowledge of the general direction of this road and of the class forces that lead to it but only the *experience of the millions* when they tackled the job could indicate this road and open it up.¹

Lenin's analysis clarified those aspects of the masses' direct historical experience linked with the concrete conditions of the struggle and of the party's policy that could not be foreseen in their day by Marx and Engels. By disclosing the significance of the masses' activity as the subject and the decisive force of the socialist revolution it helps deepen understanding of the sense of revolutionary and constructive creative work. It equips fraternal parties with the ability to appraise the masses' activity properly to see the new that needs to be developed and advanced so as to carry through the socialist revolution successfully.

It was Lenin it must be stressed who made a deep analysis of the historical role of the First International founded by Marx and Engels and of the activity of the Second International.² He not only founded a new, Communist

¹ See V. I. Lenin *From a Publicist's Diary* *Collected Works* Vol. 25 1974 pp. 285-86.

² The First International (The International Working Men's Association)—the first mass international organisation of the proletariat founded by Marx and Engels in 1864. Formally dissolved in 1876.

International but also demonstrated its significance for the revolutionary movement and for consolidating and developing the then still young Communist Parties. Study of the experience of the whole international Communist movement and of the experience of the individual parties did much to help them avoid mistakes in their activity, take the road of consistently revolutionary struggle, link themselves closely with the masses, guide themselves constructively by revolutionary theory and consistently fight opportunist shilly shallying and wavering.

He taught that social development never followed a straight and narrow path; that the revolutionary movement and revolutionary struggle also did not consist in one victory simply and was not a triumphant procession. At the same time he said that it was not for Communists to give way to despair and desperation at temporary failures and defeats of any kind which were unavoidable in such a great matter as the socialist revolution and building of socialism, but which could not stop humankind's historical march to socialism.

Lenin noted that the zigzag character of revolutionary development was sometimes caused by forced compromises between the forces of the old society and the new, when the new forces still proved to be insufficiently ready to overcome the old society's resistance. At the same time he stressed (1) that zigzags in the course of history and in the development of the Communist movement were not fatal; that Communists and the revolutionary masses were not powerless before them; and (2) that during the class struggle, socialist revolution and building of the new society, the revolutionary forces could influence the general course of events and that this influence depended on their level of ideological and political maturity and of the fight against opportunism.

This approach helped him formulate reliable criteria to guide Communists in the study of historical experience, so as to correctly determine what mistakes and trends they must oppose and in order to be objective when evaluating the events taking place.

He stressed that even defeats could further the fight of the working class for socialism if revolutionaries studied them and drew the necessary lessons from them. In that sense the experience of revolutions that have been temporarily defeated provides much that is instructive for present generations of revolutionaries and for the fight to consolidate the working people's power. No revolutionary can ignore this experience if he is trying to avoid unnecessary repetition of the mistakes of his predecessors in the revolutionary struggle, to make the transition to socialism as painless as possible for the masses and to reduce the loss of human life to a minimum.

Comprehension of the miscalculations made and blunders committed and search for the objective reasons for them are immensely important in theory and practice and ultimately promote victory and consolidation of the socialist revolution. Taking today's period of development of the world revolutionary process, we cannot help recalling the immense significance that Chilean Communists' analysis of the experience of the class struggle in their country has had for the international Communist movement. Speaking of the urgent tasks of their sweeping self-critical analysis, Luis Corvalán stressed:

We Chilean Communists never tried to impose our experience on anybody. But that of each party belongs to them all and taken together their experience forms the aggregate of international experience. We have learned from other parties and revolutions. We believe that it is our duty to explain our experience so that the others can consider it if they so wish.¹

It is their undoubted merit that they exposed the strong and weak sides of the development of the revolution in their country and made clear the reasons that led to defeat of the working class and temporary set back of the revolutionary forces. They held a special plenary meeting of their Central Committee which generalised the results of their analysis. In exposing the mistakes and omissions of their party this meeting distinguished two main factors. First, the party had not sufficiently developed its line on the workers' full winning of state power. Second, it had not managed to build close ties with the army and to arrange for constant work to be carried on among the military so as to draw them over to the side of the revolution and to dispel their wrong ideas about the working class and Popular Unity.²

In addition, the leaders of the Chilean Communist Party published articles in *World Marxist Review*, the international journal of Communist and Workers' Parties, on concrete matters that arose during study of the experience of the Chilean revolution.³

There are cases unfortunately when the leaders of the revolutionary forces in some one country, while being ready to offer help and explain the mistakes and blunders of others, experience categorically object to analysis of their own experience and clarification of the errors and mistakes they

¹ *El Pleno de Agosto de 1966 del Comité Central del Partido Comunista de Chile*, p. 26.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 27-32, 38.

³ See *One Thousand Days of Revolution*.

themselves have committed. On the whole however a supercilious high handed scorning of the experience accumulated by their predecessors and all fraternal parties is foreign to Marxist Leninists. Foreign too is the approach that one party has the right to express its views about the experience of the revolutionary activity of any other country while other parties do not have this right and their point of view is interference in the first party's internal affairs. Equality in the exchange of their common wealth i.e. world revolutionary experience is as important and inalienable a right of fraternal parties as full equality and independence in their activity and as the joint participation of all parties in the development of the revolutionary theory which in turn (in Lenin's words) *grows out* of the sum total of the revolutionary experience and the revolutionary thinking of all countries in the world.¹

Why do differences arise among Communist Parties as regards certain aspects of their experience of the struggle? The following remarks of Leonid Brezhnev at the 26th Congress of the CPSU may help explain this point.

As the influence of the Communist Parties grows the tasks facing them are becoming more and more complex and diverse. And sometimes that gives rise to divergent appraisals and differences in approach to concrete issues of the class struggle and to discussions between parties. It is necessary to co-operate in the fight against the common class enemy (he stressed). The supreme arbiter in resolving problems is time and practice.²

Marxist Leninists consider that historical experience is primarily important in its concrete manifestations in the dynamics of the facts and events that are the flesh of the historical process and concrete expression of the forms of the transition from capitalism to socialism. Those who separate revolutionary theory from the affairs and practice of the revolutionary struggle not only impoverish this theory itself but also make it almost impossible to develop it theoretically. Cut off from its concrete historical manifestation it loses perspective and opportunities to develop and deviates into a realm of fruitless abstract constructs isolated from real life.

¹ V. I. Lenin *The Voice of an Honest French Socialist* *Collected Works* Vol. 21 p. 354.

² L. I. Brezhnev *Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU to the XXVI Congress* pp. 22-23.

Conclusions

Marx Engels and Lenin discovered and substantiated the main laws of the proletarian revolution Experience of the revolutionary movement helped them explain and define the inevitable roads of the revolutionary change without which a socialist society could not be built At the same time problems arose in the course of revolutionary practice whose solution presupposed great variety in revolutionary strategy and tactics The general patterns of the revolution reflect its main content and essential aspects The distinguishing feature of the revolutionary process is reflected in the various forms in which these patterns are realised and in the specific manifestations caused by separate countries differences in level of economic and political development historical traditions and national features

The Marxist Leninist theory of the objective and subjective factors of revolution is extremely important for the revolutionary movement A proper understanding of their dialectical development and concrete expression gives Communists the key to determining the most effective forms and directions of revolutionary activity Such an understanding is all the more important because the role of the subjective factor is growing in our epoch

Practice indicates that it is impossible to advance without allowing for the lessons of history And that means primarily the historical experience of the Communist movement Thorough allowance for that experience is a *sine qua non* of the Marxist Leninist approach to any issue of social revolution and of the building of socialism and communism

Chapter IV

PROBLEMS OF THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

The revolutionary transforming of the world has become a world process and irreversible in our day. Imperialism does not have forces it can rely on to stop the forward movement of history. But the passage from capitalism to socialism is not an automatic or uniform process. Any kowtowing to spontaneity or simplification of the approach to problems of revolution is deeply alien to Marxist Leninists. While clearly conscious of the historical necessity of the world victory of socialism and communism they fully realise that every step along this road is made only at the price of immense efforts by the masses of the working people led by revolutionary parties of the working class and calls for the tackling of very involved matters especially of the timing forms and features of the socialist revolution.

1 The Theory of Development of the Revolution

A survey of the problems of the socialist revolution must begin with the matter of the growth of the bourgeois democratic revolution into a socialist one. This is not just a matter of historical interest. In spite of the ideas having already been expressed by Marx and Engels and later developed in a comprehensive way by Lenin who gave a concrete application of it in the practice of the revolutionary struggle a sharp theoretical battle still rages around it in which the point is still being made that Lenin's theory of the growing over of the revolution has become obsolete because more than 70 years have passed since he developed it and because many new problems have emerged that it cannot answer. It is also said that the revolutions that have taken place since in many countries have not proceeded in all of them as it did in Russia.

No little time has passed in fact since Lenin developed his

theory and the revolutionary process has in fact taken extremely varied forms but Lenin's theory still precisely reflects its content. As for the differences in its practical application in various countries they were quite to be expected. It would be a departure from Leninism if Communists copied the experience of the revolutionary changes in other countries including Russia's experience. The fraternal parties stress the need to apply Lenin's ideas constructively and to employ all their richness to analyse the contemporary conditions of the development of the revolution.

When working out his theory Lenin based himself on Marx's and Engels' theory of proletarian revolution in particular on their propositions of continuous revolution and the need to combine the revolutionary peasant movement with the proletarian revolution.

Marx had already expressed his idea of continuous revolution in the 1840s. In one of his articles against the petty bourgeois German democrat Karl Heinzen he wrote that the workers

can and must accept the *bourgeois revolution* as a precondition for the *workers revolution*. However they cannot for a moment regard it as their *ultimate goal*¹

For Communists Marx and Engels wrote the point at issue is not that of modifying private property but of abolishing it, not of glossing over class contradictions but of abolishing classes, not of improving existing society but of founding a new one. The fighting slogan of the working class they urged should be continuous Revolution.

Experience of the revolutions of 1848-9 enabled them to draw conclusions as well about the need to combine the revolutionary peasant movement and the proletarian revolution. Not long before his death Engels wrote (in an article on the peasant question in France and Germany) that in order to win political power the party of the workers must first go out from the town to the countryside, must make itself a power in the countryside.²

Lenin, basing himself on their ideas, built a whole theory of the growing over of the bourgeois democratic revolution into a socialist one and formulated the principles of its practical application in the activity of the working class and its revolutionary vanguard in which he put forward and substan-

¹ Karl Marx, *Moralising Criticism and Critical Morality*. In Karl Marx/Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 333.

² Friedrich Engels, *Die Bauernfrage in Frankreich und Deutschland*. In Karl Marx/Friedrich Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 22, S. 486.

tiated several fundamentally new propositions. What were they?

Marx and Engels considered these problems when capitalism was still developing along an ascending line and thought that the role of dominant force in the bourgeois democratic revolution belonged in accordance with the historical experience of that time to the capitalist class. Lenin showed that under imperialism when capitalism had entered the stage of decay and break up and the capitalist class had become reactionary only the proletariat could consistently fulfil that role and unite the broad masses of the people under its leadership. This thesis of the proletariat's dominant role in the democratic revolution is the key to Lenin's theory of growing over since it is the dominance of the proletariat that creates the premises and conditions for a socialist orientation of democratic reforms.

Lenin demonstrated furthermore when developing Marx's and Engels' idea of the continuity of the revolution that it was already possible in the new historical situation to carry out separate socialist reforms before full completion of the bourgeois democratic revolution. In his theory these revolutions are considered as two inseparable phases of a single revolutionary process.

Marx and Engels linked the possibility of the bourgeois democratic revolution's developing into a socialist one with preliminary victory of proletarian revolutions in industrially advanced capitalist countries. Lenin showed that the dominant role of the working class in the bourgeois democratic revolution made such a development possible with the active support of the proletariat of those countries even before the socialist revolution had occurred in them.

Let us now examine Lenin's theory in more detail. This should it would seem present great interest from the standpoint of today as well as on the historical plane for there are quite a few countries in the world now where the job of completing the democratic revolution and its development into a socialist revolution are paramount for Communists and other progressive forces. These are the many newly emancipated countries with weakly developed capitalism in which there is an acute struggle against pre-capitalist relations for democratic reforms of the social and political structures. They are the countries of a socialist orientation in which the democratic national liberation movement is merging with an anti-capitalist trend. And in the developed capitalist countries too general democratic tasks are being very acutely posed and their solution linked more and more by the workers with a socialist perspective. This is perfectly natural because Lenin's theory of the growing over of the democratic

revolution into a socialist one with its theses of the stages of the revolutionary process and the relation between the fight for democracy and the struggle for socialism evokes broad interest in the ranks of the revolutionary and democratic movements

Lenin showed from study of the revolutionary struggle in Russia that the proletariat having won in the democratic revolution must lead the working people to the socialist revolution and that Russian revolutionaries would inevitably be forced to tackle both the democratic and the socialist tasks of the class struggle. He stressed that the support of the Russian rural proletariat was necessary for a successful fight against the capitalist class that it was an essential condition for the victory of the working class ¹

Lenin developed his theory further in his pamphlet *Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution* and in other writings during and after the first Russian revolution. His stand on issues of strategy and tactics in the bourgeois democratic revolution and on its growing into a socialist one was confirmed by the Third Bolshevik congress of the party held in the spring of 1905 ²

Lenin's writings and the Congress decisions showed (1) that the working class must be dominant in both the first and the second stage of the revolution (2) that there should be no impassable barrier between bourgeois democratic and socialist revolutions and that a proper policy of revolutionaries could ensure development of the general democratic revolution into a socialist one in the course of consistent and often simultaneous tackling of their tasks which were often interwoven (3) that a regrouping of forces around the proletariat at the end of the bourgeois democratic revolution for a direct passage to the socialist one was certain considering the way the class struggle went in Russia during the first Russian revolution (4) that specific roads and methods had been indicated that would ensure successful growing over of the revolution

Let us now analyse the main theses of Lenin's theory in more detail. Previously in all bourgeois revolutions in the West the capitalists had been the leaders. The proletariat had not then been sufficiently developed and organised was not

¹ V I Lenin *What the Friends of the People Are and How They Fight the Social Democrats* *Collected Works* Vol I p 291

² Bolshevism was a trend of political thought and a political party formed in 1903 as a result of the fight of Russian revolutionary Marxists headed by Lenin. The concept of Bolshevism arose from the elections at the party's Second Congress in which Lenin's supporters received a majority (*bolshinstvo*) of the votes and their opponents a minority (*menshinstvo*) (hence Menshevism)

yet equipped with an advanced revolutionary theory and did not have its own party. In contrast the bourgeoisie was more organised, had its own party and could draw the peasantry behind it in the fight against feudalism. Thus it was in particular during the Great French Revolution and during the bourgeois revolutions of 1848-9. The Mensheviks and all the opportunists of the Second International proceeding from the point that the revolution in Russia was bourgeois-democratic in character drew the dogmatic conclusion that only the liberal bourgeoisie could be its leader as it has been in the West.¹ Lenin however convincingly demonstrated the flimsiness of this conclusion and of the Menshevik policy and tactics stemming from it. He showed that it was a policy of tailing behind that disoriented the proletariat and belittled the role of the workers' party.

Lenin noted in his writings that the revolution was happening in Russia in a situation of relatively developed capitalism which had given rise to a compact industrial proletariat and working class movement and that it was therefore impossible to equate the revolutions in Europe of the end of the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth century and the democratic revolution in Russia as the Mensheviks did. In spite of the revolution's bourgeois democratic character he pointed out the proletariat could and must be its leader as the only class that was revolutionary to the bitter end and because its interests coincided with those of the overwhelming majority of society its natural ally was the peasantry. In that situation the capitalist class which was inclined to compromise with the autocracy had to be isolated.

The forces making the democratic revolution i.e. the proletariat and very poor peasantry were capable of prolonging it, extending it into a socialist revolution and establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat. Lenin taught that the working class acting as the predominant force of the bourgeois-democratic revolution should use its leading role in it in order to push it as far ahead as possible to win maximum freedom to abolish the remnants of feudalism and to set about tackling purely proletarian class issues.

It would be a radical mistake to think that the struggle for democracy was capable of diverting the proletariat from the socialist revolution or of hiding, overshadowing it etc. On the contrary in the same way as there

¹ *Menshevism* was an opportunist reformist petty-bourgeois trend in the Russian Social-Democratic Party. It took shape at the Second Congress of the Party in 1903 when Lenin's opponents were in the minority in the elections for party bodies.

can be no victorious socialism that does not practise full democracy so the proletariat cannot prepare for its victory over the bourgeoisie without an all round consistent and revolutionary struggle for democracy¹

The proletariat needed the bourgeois democratic revolution as a kind of clearing of the ground for the socialist revolution because abolition of the remnants of feudalism would ensure the most rapid development of society productive powers which would quite naturally lead to accelerated maturing of the preconditions for the socialist revolution and abolition of capitalist regimes and create the conditions necessary for developing the proletariat's class organisations

In the fight for victory of the bourgeois democratic revolution the working class would go through a school of political education and revolutionary training and tempering and after victory of that revolution which would sweep aside the remnants of feudalism would stand face to face with the capitalist class which had previously been using semi feudal regimes and order of things against the proletariat The working class marching in the van of the bourgeois democratic revolution should therefore work to make it victorious as fast as possible and immediately boldly and resolutely set about freeing labour from the yoke of capital

When we are discussing the relation between the bourgeois democratic and socialist revolutions in our day we must also take into account that the capitalist class and feudal elements are allies in the fight against the proletariat so that a full rooting out of feudalism is impossible in modern conditions without a revolutionary struggle against capitalism

An objective cause of the interaction of the bourgeois democratic and socialist revolutions is the fact that victory of the first does not abolish a country's dependence on foreign capital since it does not abolish the local capitalist class's links with it Russia's experience showed that only a socialist revolution offered a chance of deliverance from the tutelage of foreign capital

Lenin's thesis about the regrouping of class forces in rural areas during the revolution is of the greatest significance for a proper understanding of his theory of development of the democratic revolution into a socialist one During the former he argued during fight to develop it into a socialist revolution the rural poor would rally around the working class and would advance together with it and under its leadership to achieve the dictatorship of the proletariat Lenin completely unmasked the anti Marxist theory of the

¹ V I Lenin The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self Determination *Collected Works* Vol 22 p 144

stability of the peasant smallholding showing that as capitalism grew in agriculture there was a stratification of the peasantry the middling ones becoming fewer every year while the poor ones increased in numbers that the overwhelming majority of the peasants were impoverished and ruined reduced to misery and passed into the ranks of the proletariat and that only a few got rich and passed into the ranks of the capitalist class It was just such a process that was taking place in pre revolutionary Russia just as it had done before in many other countries This was creating favourable conditions for drawing the working peasantry over to the side of the working class in its fight against the remnants of feudalism and capitalism and for building a new socialist system

Lenin directly linked success of all reforms during the growing over of the revolution with the creation of a provisional revolutionary government that would be a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry a dictatorship that was needed not just to complete victory over czarism and so put the finishing touches to the revolution but mainly to prolong it to smash the resistance of the counter revolution and to begin the transition to a socialist revolution It would be impossible to do all this without a revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry because the implementing of these changes could not help evoke desperate resistance of the landowners big businessmen and foreign capital

Lenin attached great significance to the working class party having a correct attitude to the governments that arose during a revolution At the height of the revolution he considered it was quite permissible to be involved in a government even one headed by the capitalist class and in certain circumstances even necessary but Communists when taking part in such a government should never forget the class aims of the proletariat and should unswervingly defend its interests Their job was to push the bourgeois-democratic revolution as far along as possible And the party he said must retain its political independence in a provisional government

Lenin attributed great significance to a revolutionary army for successful completion of the bourgeois-democratic revolution and developing it into a socialist one The working people he considered should create a revolutionary army in addition to a provisional government and this army should include (1) the armed proletariat and peasantry (2) organised advanced contingents of members of these classes (3) regular army units prepared to side with the people And in concretising the job of the revolutionary army Lenin stressed

that it would have to do the following declare the uprising give the masses military leadership create strong points of open national struggle spread the insurrection to neighbouring localities ensure full political freedom initially perhaps in a small part of the country thereby developing the revolutionary constructive activity of the lower orders of the people ever more broadly Successful tackling of all these issues he said would provide the conditions for the activity of a provisional revolutionary government

Noting the difference between the democratic and socialist tasks Lenin pointed out the need to combine them boldly writing

One should know how to *combine* the struggle for democracy and the struggle for the socialist revolution *subordinating* the first to the second In this lies the whole difficulty in this is the whole essence ¹

It was necessary he stressed to put forward all the democratic demands without losing sight in doing so of the main thing the socialist revolution The struggle for the main thing may blaze up even though it has begun with the struggle for something partial ²

Lenin built his theory in bitter struggle with both Russian and international opportunism Bernstein Kautsky and other Social Democrats would not accept the idea that the working class could lead the bourgeois-democratic revolution and steer it to a socialist one In their view the working class's job was simply by following the capitalist class to help it achieve bourgeois-democratic demands By mechanically following these ideas Russian opportunists put an unnecessary barrier between the two revolutions did not believe the peasants were capable of being allies of the proletariat and strove to slow down progressive development of the revolution

There was a deep difference of principle between the theses of Marx and Engels about continuous revolution and the approach of international Social Democracy and the Russian Mensheviks to it We have already mentioned that Marx and Engels dealt with the problem of the bourgeois-democratic and socialist revolutions in accordance with the historical experience of the pre imperialist epoch They treated several issues connected with it moreover (and it is very important to stress this) on a purely theoretical plane not having sufficient practical data for a generalisation As for Lenin he put forward his theory proceeding from analysis of the practical experience of social development in a new

¹ V I Lenin To Inessa Armand *Collected Works*, Vol 35 p 267

² *Ibid.* p 268

epoch the epoch of imperialism and proletarian revolutions

One version of opportunism was Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution. He denied the revolutionary capability of the peasantry and considered that the working class could not lead it and would have to take power immediately into its own hands counting in the future only on the international support of the proletariat of other countries. He saw the sole road to victory of the revolution in Russia in its conversion into a world revolution.

Lenin's theory had more than passing international significance. While created in the specific conditions of Russia it reflected the patterns of the revolutionary process in the epoch of imperialism.

In basing themselves on his theory of development of the revolution Marxist-Leninist parties start from the point that the working class can and should be the predominant force of the revolution both in its bourgeois-democratic or in today's lingo democratic stage and in its socialist one. The main trends of which are closely interwoven during the revolution there is a consistent regrouping of the forces involved and many of Lenin's concrete pointers on issues of strategy and tactics during the change in the revolution retain their significance.

When working out problems of the fight for socialism Communist Parties start from the point that the present period calls for a concretising of Lenin's theory in accordance with the new conditions and the specific features of the different countries.

Let us consider three points in this connection.

The elements of feudalism and forms of national oppression and economic development have undergone a substantial transformation in many countries in recent decades and in that respect there have been changes in the character of the democratic struggle. Today the general democratic tasks of the working-class movement in developed capitalist countries stem from the anti-monopolist content of the fight of the working people's masses. The development of capitalism which once began under the slogan of the fight for democracy is leading today to a limiting of democratic rights and freedoms and is again putting extension of democracy on the agenda. The big monopoly capitalist class is operating as an enemy of democracy and striving to limit it while the working class and the broad masses of the people are defending it.

A second new point is that the social basis of the socialist revolution is being broadened in today's conditions. The most varied sectors of the working people can be allies of the proletariat in it. Not only are the peasantry taking an active

part in the struggle but also big groups of white collar workers intellectuals and other members of the middle strata oppressed and restricted by the monopoly capitalists. The proletariat is more and more often acting together with these groups which is affecting both the character and forms of making the socialist revolution.

Finally in today's conditions the question of the pace of the changing of the revolution is being posed differently. Whereas its pace in Russia say was largely determined by the need to tackle many democratic tasks before passing to socialist reforms proper now the general democratic and socialist tasks can be tackled more or less simultaneously which is possible because the capitalist system as a whole is ripe for socialism and countries emancipated from the colonial yoke are beginning to tackle socialist issues while carrying out general democratic reforms relying on the solidarity of the socialist world.

It does not follow of course that the period between the bourgeois democratic and socialist revolutions will necessarily be short in all countries. In the involved conditions of the development of state monopoly capitalism and sharpening of the class struggle between socialism and capitalism on a world scale the social and political aspects of the pre revolutionary and revolutionary development in individual countries are becoming involved and interwoven and new factors accelerating or slowing down the course of the revolutionary movement are developing so that the matter of the pace of the changing of the democratic revolution into a socialist one must be approached with due allowance for the concrete situation in each country.

In many countries we know primarily those of Western Europe the bourgeois revolutions took place long ago and socialist revolutions have not yet been made. Nevertheless we cannot say that there is any stabilisation of capitalism in them and that there are no signs of the possibility of a socialist revolution. On the contrary as we pointed out in the previous chapter there are full grounds for concluding that the subjective and objective preconditions for sweeping democratic anti-monopolist reforms and a transition on their basis to socialism exist in capitalist countries.

Lenin's theory of the growing over of the revolution provides Communists with a reliable instrument of comprehension gives direction to their work among the masses and their preparation of a general democratic attack on the monopolies which if successful would open the road to the working people for socialist reforms and transformations. Today this theory is just as living and topical as it was decades ago.

2 The Forms of the Revolution

We have already touched on certain aspects of the forms of revolutionary changes in connection with the general problems of the transition to socialism. We shall now examine this question in direct relation to the tasks of the socialist revolution.

The political forms in which the change of power takes place may vary and depend on the one hand on the forms of the capitalist class's power: the strength of constitutional institutions, the army and repressive bodies, and the character of the political regime as a whole; on the other hand, the forms of the change of power are associated with the level of the working class's organisation, the methods of its struggle, the strength of its alliance with other social strata, and the general balance of class power at home and in the world as a whole.

These factors determine whether the change of power will take place peacefully without the use of armed force, or whether it will take the character of an armed clash or war.

For me as a revolutionary (Engels wrote) any means is right that leads to the goal, the most violent as well as that which seems the mildest.¹

And Marx wrote:

We shall act against you [i.e. bourgeois governments] peacefully whenever possible and by force of arms whenever necessary.²

What basic demands should any Marxist make? Lenin asked when examining the forms of the struggle?

In the first place, Marxism differs from all primitive forms of socialism by not binding the movement to any one particular form of struggle. It recognises the most varied forms of struggle, and it does not concoct them, but only generalises, organises, gives conscious expression to those forms of struggle of the revolutionary classes which arise of themselves in the course of the movement. Absolutely hostile to all abstract formulas and to all doctrinaire recipes, Marxism demands an attentive attitude to the mass struggle in progress, which, as the movement develops, as the class consciousness of the masses

¹ Engels an Gerson Friere 18. Dez. 1889. In: Karl Marx/Friedrich Engels Werke, Bd. 37, S. 377.

² Karl Marx/Friedrich Engels Werke, Bd. 17 (Dietz Verlag, Berlin 1968), S. 651.

grows as economic and political crises become acute continually gives rise to new and more varied methods of defense and attack Marxism therefore positively does not reject any form of struggle Under no circumstances does Marxism confine itself to the forms of struggle possible and in existence at the given moment only recognising as it does that new forms of struggle unknown to the participants of the given period *inevitably* arise as the given social situation changes In this respect Marxism *learns* if we may so express it from mass practice and makes no claim whatever to *teach* the masses forms of struggle invented by systematisers in the seclusion of their studies

In the second place Marxism demands an absolute *ly historical* examination of the question of the forms of struggle To treat this question apart from the concrete historical situation betrays a failure to understand the rudiments of dialectical materialism At different stages of economic evolution depending on differences in political national cultural living and other conditions different forms of struggle come to the fore and become the principal forms of struggle and in connection with this the secondary auxiliary forms of struggle undergo change in their turn To attempt to answer yes or no to the question whether any particular means of struggle should be used without making a detailed examination of the concrete situation of the given movement at the given stage of its development means completely to abandon the Marxist position ¹

Lenin thus approached the matter of the forms of struggle dialectically posing it in relation to the specific conditions place and time

The resolutions of the Communist movement and of the separate parties also speak of the necessity for a concrete tackling of the question of the roads of revolutionary transformations The statement of the 1960 Meeting said that the actual possibility of one road or another to socialism depended on the concrete historical conditions in each separate country ² And the statement of the 1969 Meeting stressed that each party chooses a peaceful or non peaceful way of transition to socialism ³

¹ V I Lenin *Guerilla Warfare Collected Works* Vol 11 1972 pp 213-14

² See *The Struggle for Peace Democracy and Socialism*, p 75

³ *International Meeting of Communist and Workers Parties, Moscow 1969*
p 37

For a number of reasons mentioned in Chapter II there is the possibility in many capitalist countries today of a relatively peaceful transition to socialism¹

Several parties starting from an analysis of their countries development hold that a road of peaceful development is ruled out in practice for them and that the only prospect in the immediate future seems to be armed struggle² In either case—whether in conditions of a peaceful or a non peaceful road—Marxist Leninist parties consider it a revolutionary transformation of society and overthrow of the existing capitalist regime

The capitalist state is a form of the dictatorship of the dominant class Various bodies employing various forms of coercion in their operations (from intellectual to armed) have been set up for its security The proletariat therefore cannot replace the capitalists state machine without opposing a corresponding appropriate force to it and without exerting effective pressure leading to collapse of the capitalists power As Engels wrote to Bebel

no party has disavowed the right to armed resistance in *certain circumstances* unless it was lying No party could renounce this ultimate right³

It is impossible Lenin wrote to rescue the people from tyrants without violence in relation to them

Without revolutionary coercion directed against the avowed enemies of the workers and peasants it is impossible to break down the resistance of these exploiters⁴

Whether violence is used or not in the class struggle does not in itself yet say anything about whether it is a reactionary or a progressive and democratic measure In modern society violence coercion is a class concept An abstract moralising approach to appraisal of its substance and role is inadmissible Violence against whom? In whose class interests? Only when a Marxist has answered those questions can he work out his attitude to any act of coercion It is from that position that he

¹ It follows from the programmes of Communist Parties that many of them consider a peaceful road to socialism possible and base their activity on that premise e.g. Parties in Western Europe the Communist Parties of the USA Canada Japan India and other countries

² These parties primarily include several in Latin America Asia and Africa

³ Engels an August Bebel in Plauen bei Dresden London 18 Nov 1884 In Karl Marx/Friedrich Engels Werke Bd 36 (Dietz Verlag Berlin 1967) S 240

⁴ V I Lenin Speech at the Fourth Conference of Gubernia Extraordinary Commissions February 6 1920 Collected Works, Vol 42 1969 p 170

plumps for revolutionary violence (in one form or another) of the exploited against the exploiters during the carrying through of the socialist revolution. And that is why he *opposes* general moralising preaching about violence coercion civil war being an evil irrespective of who uses it and for what. Such views (also moreover irrespective of whose and what objective intentions they further) objectively cover up in various ways the violence used against the working people in a society of antagonistic classes and encourage its maintenance. And in any case they have nothing in common with scientific socialism. Lenin said that

a Marxist bases himself on the class struggle and not social peace. In certain periods of acute economic and political crises the class struggle ripens into a direct civil war i.e. into an armed struggle between two sections of the people. In such periods a Marxist is *obliged* to take the stand of civil war. Any moral condemnation of civil war would be absolutely impermissible from the standpoint of Marxism.¹

We must also stress this point here. There have been times in the history of the working class movement unfortunately when the revolutionary forces indecision in employing violence and coercion against the class enemy led to failure to exploit a revolutionary situation or even to loss of positions won in revolutionary struggle. And in the end that rounded on the workers not only in brutal mass repression by the capitalist class but also unnecessary decades of oppression suffering and poverty. Marx and Engels as we know saw in the fact that the Communards were too indecisive irresolute and inconsistent in resorting to armed violence a reason for the defeat of the Paris Commune.

Lenin who made a penetrating thorough study of the experience of the Commune drew the necessary conclusions from it during the October Revolution of 1917.

In certain contemporary Marxist studies and in the statements of publicists in the heat of ideological and theoretical polemics one comes across the desire to lay emphasis on the judgements repeatedly expressed by the founders of Marxism Leninism about the forced nature and undesirability of measures of coercion in the revolutionary struggle by the proletariat coming to power. Willy nilly if only that aspect of the business is stressed it can lead to distortion of the character and essence of revolutionary violence and to an untrue idea of its relation to the concept of the true democracy that is established during any socialist revolution.

¹ V I Lenin *Guerrilla Warfare Collected Works*, Vol 11 pp 219-20

whether it is being made by armed means or relatively peacefully. We have already remarked and would again stress that irrespective of the revolution's forms the capitalist class will not voluntarily surrender either political power or its economic privileges without class coercion by the proletariat. That is the lesson of the revolutions in Russia and of all the revolutions of the twentieth century whether victorious or defeated. The events in Chile once more reminded us of that and also the stubborn resistance of reaction to democratic reforms in Portugal, Nicaragua, Afghanistan and other countries.

So far we have been concerned with the fact that the need to employ revolutionary violence against the exploiters springs from domestic features of the class struggle for consistent democracy and socialism, but it is also governed by features of the acute class struggle on the world arena. Open military intervention, local wars, economic blockade, the withholding of diplomatic recognition, ideological sabotage and so on are means by which imperialism reckons to hold back the revolutionary process and undermine the socialist system. Lenin wrote that if the Soviet state had tried to act against international imperialism which was staking everything on crushing the revolution by persuasion and words and had not answered the terror forced on Soviet Russia by the Entente, overthrown classes, whiteguards and interventionists by armed force, it would not have held out for even two months.¹

And now, as we know, there is still a real danger of the export of counter-revolution to countries taking the road of consistent democracy and socialism.

Marxists, while stressing the necessity (and inevitability) of the proletariat's employing class violence as the revolutionary struggle develops and for its successful completion, and while preparing the working people for that, very resolutely attack and oppose making a virtue out of violent, coercive means of struggle or making it very nearly the sole means of class education of the masses as left radical ideologists do (e.g. Régis Debray, Frantz Fanon, Herbert Marcuse). Violence in itself is not a factor generating a revolutionary situation or inevitably guaranteeing its conversion into a victorious revolution.

Violence is not an end in itself for Marxists, and its use is by no means always evidence of real strength. It often only covers up some weakness of the movement. Engels, as we know, criticised Dühring for trying to lend violence a

¹ See V. I. Lenin, *The Seventh All Russia Congress of Soviets*, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 223.

self sufficient character Lenin (as we have already noted) also linked historical development with material force and not with naked violence¹ Without material force all the calls for revolutionary violence so loudly made by ultra left radicals in capitalist countries will not develop into revolution but into an anarchic revolt doomed to failure and capable only of disorganising and demoralising the working class The actions of ultra left extremists which are often inspired and subsidised by reaction play the objective role of a force provoking (and justifying) especially repressive acts by Big Business against the revolutionary minded proletariat and its vanguard Communist and Workers Parties

Drawing on the experience of the international and Russian revolutionary movement Lenin called for a concrete historical approach to the role of force in the revolution and did not consider it a means legitimate at all times and in all cases if it was used by progressive forces He introduced the concept of *necessary violence* into Marxist theory

Under certain circumstances violence is both necessary and useful but there are circumstances under which violence cannot produce results There have been cases however of not everyone appreciating this difference so that it must be discussed²

Armed uprising has a special place in the conception of the non peaceful road of revolution Lenin considered it the culmination of the struggle the means of overcoming the capitalist class's resistance and sharply altering the balance of forces in society in favour of the revolutionary proletariat He took an extremely serious attitude toward armed insurrection taught the workers to prepare for it carefully and not to lose sight of the many factors affecting its success He always considered insurrection a broad action of the working masses

An armed uprising is the highest method of *political* struggle Its success from the point of view of the proletariat is the success of a proletarian uprising under Social Democratic leadership and not of any other kind of uprising requires extensive development of all aspects of the workers' movement³

Insurrection he said is the political outcome of a quite concrete historical reality and must be approached under that angle

¹ See V I Lenin *While the Proletariat Is Doing the Fighting the Bourgeoisie Is Stealing Towards Power* *Collected Works* Vol 9 1977 p 177

² *The Achievements and Difficulties of the Soviet Government* *Collected Works*, Vol 29 p 58-59

³ V I Lenin To S I Gusev *Collected Works* Vol 34 1966 p 357

It was impossible to begin armed struggle he stressed before a revolutionary situation had built up or before signs of its maturing had developed Before the October Revolution he wrote as follows

If the revolutionary party has no majority in the advanced contingents of the revolutionary classes and in the country insurrection is out of the question Moreover insurrection requires (1) growth of the revolution on a country wide scale (2) the complete moral and political bankruptcy of the old government for example the coalition government (3) extreme vacillation in the camp of all middle groups i e those who do *not* fully support the government although they did fully support it yesterday¹

Lenin broadly analysed all aspects of armed insurrection and gave revolutionaries the following advice

(1) *Never play with insurrection but when beginning it realise firmly that you must go all the way*

(2) Concentrate a *great superiority of forces* at the decisive point and at the decisive moment otherwise the enemy who has the advantage of better preparation and organisation will destroy the insurgents

(3) Once the insurrection has begun you must act with the greatest *determination* and by all means without fail take the *offensive* The defensive is the death of every armed rising⁴

(4) You must try to take the enemy by surprise and seize the moment when his forces are scattered

(5) You must strive for *daily successes* however small (one might say hourly if it is the case of one town) and at all costs retain moral superiority²

Communist Parties using non peaceful means of struggle needless to say allow for the specific features of the present conditions of the fight against the power of capital Which is understandable Not only has the balance of power altered since Lenin developed the problems of the non peaceful road of struggle for power but the means the capitalist class employs to maintain its power—including armed means—have also changed The contemporary capitalist class can utilise special military and police equipment new means of carrying out military actions and powerful intelligence

¹ V I Lenin Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power? *Collected Works*, Vol 26 pp 133 34

² V I Lenin Advice of an Onlooker *Collected Works*, Vol 26 p 180

agencies Big changes have also taken place in the tactics of armed struggle All this is taken into account by Communist Parties that are banking on armed insurrection At the same time however they stress that Lenin's basic theses about armed insurrection retain their force

Non peaceful forms of struggle however do not consist simply in armed uprising The practice of the revolutionary struggle makes it possible to include certain elements of civil war and partisan actions in it and forcible though not necessarily armed occupation of industrial enterprises public institutions the mass media and so on

Lenin spoke of the possibility and need in certain historical circumstances to fight for socialism by way of civil war Civil war against the bourgeoisie is *also* a form of class struggle ¹ That was Lenin's premise when he put forward the slogan of converting imperialist war into civil war Socialism he stressed is impossible in time of war without civil war against the arch reactionary criminal bourgeoisie which condemns the people to an untold disaster ²

During the proletariat's fight for democracy and socialism civil war has broken out more than once as we know Counter revolution imposed civil war on the working class of Russia Finland Hungary Spain and other countries One form of forcible action or another has been used by the working people in several countries in Latin America Asia and Africa in recent years and some such action as well in Western Europe and North America

For all the importance of forcible actions in the strategy of revolutionary transformations however they are only one of the elements of the fight for socialism Marxist revolutionaries realise that it is impossible to reduce all the forms of revolutionary struggle simply to armed insurrection Such tactics would inevitably be converted into a putsch remote from understanding of the real conditions of social development and not taking the maturity of the material and subjective preconditions of the revolution into account Putsch tactics doom the revolution to defeat

The Communist movement allows for the possibility of employing non-peaceful means in the fight for power but by no means because it considers them the best and most effective ones As we have already stressed attempts to picture Communists as advocates of force and violence in all circumstances have no basis whatever Communists are profoundly interested in a peaceful road of revolution Marx

¹ V I Lenin The Junius Pamphlet *Collected Works*, Vol 22 p 317

² *Ibid*

Engels and Lenin always preferred the most painless forms of revolutionary reform and transformation. Insurrection would be madness where peaceful agitation would more swiftly and surely do the work. Marx said in an interview with the *New York World* in 1871¹ Communists Engels wrote

know only too well that all conspiracies are not only futile but even harmful. They know only too well that revolutions are not made deliberately and arbitrarily but that everywhere and at all times they have been the necessary outcome of circumstances entirely independent of the will and the leadership of particular parties and entire classes. But they also see that the development of the proletariat is in nearly every civilised country forcibly suppressed.²

The working class would, of course, prefer to take power peacefully. Lenin stressed³ In general war ran counter to the aims of the Communist Party he said in 1918.⁴

These statements refute the allegations of critics of Marxism-Leninism that the idea of a peaceful road of revolution only came to Communists today. If the world Communist movement laid stress for a long time on an armed road of struggle that was because of the concrete historical circumstances above all because of the preponderance of brute force in the capitalist class's fight against the revolutionary movement. In other words the choice of the road of revolution was decided by the stand of the capitalist class.

We cannot accept the statements of dogmatists that there has never been a peaceful acquisition of power by the proletariat in history. The proletariat has also won power in unarmed ways.

The experience of the people's democracies in Central and South Eastern Europe is evidence as we have already recalled of the possibility of a peaceful gaining of power. There the proletariat under the leadership of Communist and Workers Parties achieved a basically peaceful change of the democratic revolution into a socialist one.

If peaceful development of the revolution was possible decades ago it is all the more so in our day (1) because the forces of socialism and democracy have grown considerably

¹ See An Interview with Karl Marx *Labour Monthly* 1972 54 6 265

² Frederick Engels Principles of Communism In Karl Marx Frederick Engels *Collected Works* Vol 6 p 349

³ V I Lenin A Retrograde Trend in Russian Social Democracy *Collected Works* Vol 4 1977 p 276

⁴ V I Lenin Speech at a Public Meeting in Simonovsky Sub-District June 28 1918 *Collected Works*, Vol 27 p 492

throughout the world and become stronger. The working class led by Marxist Leninist parties is able to rally to itself the multimillion masses dissatisfied with the policy of the monopolists and having created a superiority of forces to make the capitalist class to capitulate without armed resistance. (2) A major factor sustaining the working people of capitalist countries is the existence of the world socialist system and the growth of its strength and power. The solidarity of the countries of the socialist community is a reliable support in the fight against counter revolution.

When we speak of a peaceful road of development of the revolution we primarily have in mind the use of parliament in the interests of the revolution. That is stated in the programmes of many parties and has been confirmed by international meetings of Communist and Workers Parties.

And of course there are such opportunities but by no means in every country. Where the capitalist class has a strong military and police state it will certainly force armed struggle onto the proletariat. Furthermore even when parliament is used that is no guarantee against armed clashes if the capitalist class begins to resist the measures that the new government is passing in parliament in the interests of the people.

Lenin pointed out many times that the party of the revolutionary proletariat must take part in parliamentary activity utilising parliament as an arena of class struggle. He categorically criticised those Communists who ignored parliamentary forms of struggle. At the same time he considered that to limit the proletariat's struggle to a fight inside parliament or to treat it as the supreme decisive form of struggle to which all other forms should be subordinated meant to slide into opportunist positions.

Only a liberal can forget the *historical limitations* and *conventional nature* of the bourgeois parliamentary system.¹

Possibilities have developed in today's conditions of using parliament not simply as an arena of class struggle but also as a weapon for the proletariat to gain power. Communists working in a parliament or as members of local municipal councils certainly stress the special character of their activity and its class basis. An endeavour to pursue a policy in the interests of the working people is inevitably and always constricted by the context of capitalist society. Therefore exceptional adherence to principle and flexibility are required.

¹ V I Lenin. *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*
Collected Works, Vol 28 p 246

of Communists in order to cope with various issues without straying from a class position

Peaceful development of the revolution however does not consist in utilising parliament and the winning of parliament cannot be the decisive act since there are other more influential centres of power (the military industrial complex international monopolies etc) in capitalist society that can paralyse the work of parliament Communist Parties therefore also consider the possibilities of employing other peaceful roads to win power

History has demonstrated the possibility of peaceful revolution without using parliament for example in Hungary in 1919 and in Russia in March to July 1917

Communist Parties consider reform of the state machinery and its gradual penetration by forces reflecting the interests of the working class one direction of the fight for peaceful development of the revolution In that connection they call for the democratisation of public institutions and the educational system broadening of the rights of civil servants and control over the police army and intelligence service Marxist Leninist parties work moreover so that democratic reforms will not be the sole and main means of struggle and do not confine themselves to the reformist limits of an evolutionary road but promote the coming of qualitative changes and create the preconditions for a socialist restructuring of society

They consider broadening of working class influence in the economy through strengthened control over the operations of entrepreneurs and their organisations to be another line of struggle for a peaceful winning of power In that they also strive to establish practical links between everyday tasks and the final goals without losing sight of the socialist perspective when tackling various practical issues~

A third trend is the fight against ruling circles anti-popular anti national policy and the creation of a public opinion that would limit the possibility of implementing reactionary measures and narrow the sphere of activity of public repressive and anti popular agencies Success in this direction promotes provision of more favourable conditions for the activity of the democratic and progressive forces and restricts the freedom of manoeuvre of capitalism s defenders

Let us touch now in rather more detail on issues linked with the fight for a peaceful foreign policy as a factor conducive to the fight for socialism It is sometimes suggested that Communist Parties that are not in power and do not have a majority in parliament are unable to affect decision making and implementation of their countries foreign policy It seems to us that such an approach would condemn

Communists in advance to passivity and lack of initiative when reactionary forces were becoming more active and deprive the masses of clear leads in the struggle

Marx and Engels saw the proletariat's independent foreign policy opposing the annexationist predatory policy of the ruling classes and its active fight against wars of conquest and in support of the national liberation movement as an inseparable component of the working class's whole emancipation struggle

The working class has its own Foreign Policy which by no means heeds what the Middle Class takes as opportune¹

Engels made the point quite clear

Our politics must be working-class politics The workers party must never be the tagtail of any bourgeois party it must be independent and have its goal and its own policy²

It is the working class's and Communists' own foreign policy that most fully displays their ability to combine the tackling of national issues with the goals and needs of the world liberation movement as a whole Such a policy directed against imperialism and to consolidating peace helps realise a peaceful road to socialism and differs in principle from both the capitalists' foreign policy and the helpless pacifism of reformists

Such are the three main trends in the fight for peaceful gaining of power

We must also note that as the revolutionary movement's experience indicates it is sometimes difficult to draw a hard and fast line in the specific conditions of the class struggle between the revolutionary and reformist understanding of the peaceful actions of the working class and its parties People who forget about the class aspect of these actions can easily lose the correct orientator Revolutionaries are the leaders of those forces of society that effect all change Lenin wrote,

Reforms are the by product of the revolutionary struggle³ He often pointed out that the bourgeoisie could use reforms so as to weaken the revolutionary movement and patch up

¹ Karl Marx Letter to Engels 25 February 1865 In Karl Marx/Friedrich Engels *Werke*, Bd 31 (Dietz Verlag Berlin 1965) S 86

² Frederick Engels *Apropos of Working-Class Political Action* In Karl Marx and Frederick Engels *Selected Works* in three volumes Vol 2 (Progress Publishers Moscow 1973) p 245

³ V I Lenin *The Peasant Reform and the Proletarian Peasant Revolution* *Collected Works*, Vol 17 1968 p 127

the doomed regime with the object of dividing and weakening the working class and of maintaining the rule of the bourgeoisie *against* the revolutionary overthrow of that rule¹

The higher the development of capitalism in a country the more political freedom there is and the more chances the bourgeoisie has to use reforms against the revolution

Marxist Leninists stress that they do not understand the peaceful road of revolution as a gradual conversion of capitalism into socialism. This transformation is a socialist revolution, a qualitative change of the economic, political and ideological relations in society that is characterised by a transfer of power to the working people and the carrying through of sweeping reforms in all areas of public affairs. At the same time progress along the peaceful road to socialism can only be ensured if it is reinforced by the masses' readiness to adopt the most varied forms of struggle including non-peaceful ones.

It also follows from the experience of the revolutionary movement that while power of the proletariat can be established in a relatively peaceful way, it is much more difficult to maintain it peacefully. Recall once more the experience of the Paris Commune. As soon as it was proclaimed the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie, relying on the support of the interventionists, imposed civil war on the proletariat and drowned the revolutionary movement in blood during it. The same thing happened in Hungary in 1919. There too a revolution carried out peacefully was attacked by external and internal enemies and in spite of heroic resistance was defeated. There are similar examples today.

In Chile, for instance, the people's forces succeeded in winning some political power in 1970.

These positions were held for three years by the Popular Unity government which put through the basic structural transformations of an anti-imperialist, anti-oligarchic revolution with a socialist vista. There was interest all over the world in the changes brought about in that period, and especially in the fact that the revolution took the peaceful road, which we Chilean Communists prefer to call the unarmed road (because it is, in practice, not at all peaceful). This interest was further increased by the fact that the government headed by President Allende had been created by a popular movement.

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Reformism in the Russian Social Democratic Movement*, *Collected Works*, Vol. 17, p. 229.

involving several parties and different democratic trends rallied round a common programme ¹

As a result of the vigorous subversive activity by imperialism and local reaction ² of the irresponsible actions of ultra leftists and of certain mistakes and omissions of the Popular Unity government (above all because of lack of a clearly worked out line for winning full power and advancing from one stage of the revolution to the next and the absence of a thought out military policy) the Chilean revolution was defeated. All legality was trampled underfoot, parliament was dissolved and political parties suppressed. Chile came under the jackboot of a military fascist junta.

That is by no means the sole case when reaction tried to make peaceful development of a revolution impossible. As soon for example as the fascist regime was overthrown in Portugal imperialism put all means into action—from the organisation of mutinies to artificial creation of economic chaos—in order to block the people's road to power and not to permit progressive development of the revolution. As soon as there was a prospect of victory of the left forces in France and Italy international reaction began to put pressure on these countries threatening various kinds of reprisals and sanctions.

Experience of the world revolutionary process has fully confirmed Lenin's thesis that the bourgeoisie looks backward in fear of democratic progress which threatens to strengthen the proletariat ³. As the events of recent years in many countries have shown international reaction which has fought the revolutionary forces for years under the false slogan defence of democracy freedom and human rights can now save the foundations of capitalism only by trampling underfoot elementary democratic rights and freedoms and by throwing overboard the very ideas of legality and constitutionality.

It is thus obvious that the revolutionary forces' choice of a peaceful or non peaceful road to winning power and their use of parliament and constitutional legality by no means depend just on certain subjective intentions of the vanguard of the working class movement. As practice demonstrates other factors have a strong influence on the final choice of concrete forms of struggle. Factors like how far a country is dependent

¹ Luis Corvalán. In *One Thousand Days of Revolution*, p. 133.

² One of the factors facilitating the military coup d'état that overthrew the Popular Unity government was the purposive disruptive activity of imperialism among the armed forces of Chile.

³ V. I. Lenin. *Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*. *Collected Works*, Vol. 9, p. 51.

on imperialism how far imperialism's special services (intelligence etc.) have penetrated its state agencies army and police whether it has joined the military blocs of international politico economic organisations etc set up by imperialism

The dialectic of the peaceful and non peaceful roads of development of the revolution is consequently one that forces Marxist Leninists to be constantly on the alert for a rapid change in the forms of struggle to set themselves the aim above all of fighting for a democratic home and foreign policy to eliminate any form of imperialist domination and control of the key sectors of national affairs, and to get such a preponderance of forces of influence among the masses and positions in public authorities and the army that would reduce the intrigues and plotting of the reactionary forces to naught

In short we must start in matters of peaceful and non peaceful paths of development of the revolution from the point that the revolution's forms of struggle may be peaceful or tougher on separate sectors and accompanied with use of armed force Lenin pointed out in his day that

the legal struggle parliamentarism and insurrection are interlinked, and *must inevitably* pass into each other according to the changes in the conditions of the movement¹

So it is incorrect to declare the peaceful road democratic and the non peaceful one undemocratic The non peaceful path is also democratic because it arises from the interests of the majority At the same time the peaceful road inevitably includes elements of coercion Furthermore as history has shown the peaceful road may become a non peaceful one and vice versa There has never been a pure revolution in history and never will be

The fraternal parties stress that the division into peaceful and non peaceful roads relates to one side of the revolutionary struggle only viz the forms of manifestation of revolutionary force and coercion It is necessary to allow for a certain relativity of this division since the concept of violence in the class struggle is very arbitrary A demonstration of the working class's strength resolution and organisation for example carried out peacefully can have a greater effect in a certain situation than an armed clash or skirmish entailing many victims

The question of revolutionary transformations does not boil down to a matter of peaceful or non peaceful means for them

¹ V I Lenin Revolutionary Marxists at the International Socialist Conference September 5-8 1915 *Collected Works* Vol 21 p 392

That is a subsidiary issue when we are concerned with the substance of the reforms the qualitative character of the changes in society and the relationship of revolutionary reforms and revolution

Marxists do not identify the forms and content of the revolutionary struggle do not equate armed insurrection or civil war as a form of social progress with the socialist revolution itself or its essence At the same time they do not present the peaceful road to socialism as non-coercive or non forcible In any forms the revolution relies on the strength of the revolutionary masses and on their pressure on the exploiters that is to say inevitably involves coercion against the exploiters

The Marxist Leninist conception of non peaceful and peaceful roads to socialism is based on generalisation of the revolutionary movement's rich experience Its proper use will prevent any kind of one sidedness and stereotype when choosing roads of struggle Only when revolutionaries have been ready to use all forms and means of struggle and have boldly utilised them have they been successful

3 The Lessons of the Revolution in Russia

Russia was the first country where the working class in alliance with the working peasantry made a socialist revolution and established the dictatorship of the proletariat An honourable but at the same time very difficult task fell to the lot of the Bolshevik Party and the workers of Russia as the first to break the chain of imperialism and to free themselves from its toils Naturally, Communist and Workers Parties in all countries evince a lively interest in the experience of the Russian workers' fight and the experience of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Study of this experience is becoming more topical in connection with the need to expose the way it is falsified by capitalist and reformist ideologists whose interest in distorting it has by no means faded with time but on the contrary has increased The following are typical of their falsifications

- (1) denial of the socialist character of the October Revolution and its depiction as a peasant revolution or even a bourgeois one
- (2) characterisation of the October Revolution as a coup at the top made by the Bolsheviks in order to seize power in the country
- (3) hushing up and glossing over the striving of Lenin's party for peaceful development of the revolution

- (4) denial of the revolution's democratic character
- (5) appraisal of the revolution as an event of local significance generated purely by Russian home conditions

On the whole the anti Marxian anti Leninist interpretation of the October Revolution is intended to depreciate its significance for world social progress to distort its experience and so hinder and prevent the international revolutionary movement's using of it

I have often had occasion to write in the press on a broad range of matters connected with the history of the revolutions in Russia and generalisation of the experience of them¹ Here I shall deal with those aspects of these problems that are particularly topical in my view for a Marxist Leninist approach to the socialist revolution appropriate in present-day conditions I shall try to reply to the falsification of the experience of the October Revolution mentioned above

First of all we have to differentiate clearly between the significance of the October Revolution as an event of world history and its importance as the direct motor of the revolutionary process and source of revolutionary experience Lenin pointed out the need for such a differentiation noting in *Left Wing Communism* that the international significance of the Russian Revolution was that it broke the chain of imperialism for the first time and thereby affected all countries of the world

Unfortunately it happens that there are distorted ideas of the October Revolution in certain circles of the working class movement in many countries as an event that is only of a historical interest remote in substance from today's problems of the fight for socialism

Let us go into this point

By the importance of the Russian revolution (in the narrow sense of the term) Lenin understood the international significance or historical inevitability of a repetition on an international scale of what has taken place in our country² He considered that

on certain very important questions of the proletarian revolution all countries will inevitably have to do what Russia has done³

Is that an orientation on copying the revolution on imitating the Bolsheviks as opponents of Leninism often say? By no

¹ See for example my book *The Three Russian Revolutions and Our Time* Moscow 1977 (in Russian)

² V I Lenin *Left Wing Communism—an Infantile Disorder* *Collected Works* Vol 31 p 21

³ *Ibid* p 31

means It is an orientation on the need for a clear understanding of the general patterns that were reflected in the October Revolution It is a pointer to the objective processes of historical development which it generated and which cannot be understood properly without studying its experience

Some people in the working class movement said soon after the revolution that the Bolsheviks were saddling Russian experience on other parties in the guise of general patterns and laws of revolution Lenin resolutely refuted and rejected such fabrications stressing that the fundamental revolutionary principles must be adapted to the specific conditions in the various countries ¹

He attached great importance to acquainting the Communist movement with the experience of the October Revolution remarking that during the fight for socialism the Russians were paving the way for the art of making revolution without mistakes ² We would stress paving the way and not some example to be imitated some model suitable for all times and circumstances The October Revolution was distinguished by exceptional specificity But what revolution is not? In order to employ the experience of any revolution the main problem is to differentiate between what is peculiar and specific in it and what is general and normal and applicable of course with due allowance for the local features of another revolution To do that it is necessary to study revolutionary experience in a thorough all round way but not to copy it Study of the fight for power in Russia however helps to understand the patterns of development of the socialist revolution in our day better It helps foresee and circumvent difficulties and overcome the obstacles in its way The history of the fight for power in Russia teaches how to determine the strategic line of the revolution in a more real way and more precisely how to carry it out more flexibly Finally it teaches how to determine the essence of both right wing and left wing opportunism and how to fight it

Study of the October Revolution shows that the patterns of development of the revolutionary movement reflected in it the main features of the activity of the different parties the proletariat's fight and the mass actions of the working people the Bolsheviks tactics and strategy their separate failures and final triumph and Lenin's varied activity leading

¹ V I Lenin The Third Congress of the Communist International June 22 July 12 1921 *Collected Works* Vol 32 p 465

² V I Lenin Speech in Polytechnical Museum August 23 1918 *Collected Works*, Vol 28 p 82

preparing and carrying through the revolution—are all factors of great international significance¹

Let us touch on certain aspects of the Bolshevik Party's activity during the 1905-7 revolution and the February and the October Revolution of 1917 that have a bearing on our theme. In our view, analysis of that activity provides certain arguments on the one hand against falsifiers of the history of our revolution and on the other hand is very important for understanding the general patterns of the contemporary revolutionary process.

We must touch again of necessity on separate aspects of the revolutionary process in Russia that we examined earlier in another key, in particular those associated with the bourgeois democratic revolution of 1905-7. That was the first people's revolution of the epoch of imperialism. It differed radically from all the preceding bourgeois revolutions in other countries. This difference, which defined its specific character, was (1) that while it was a bourgeois democratic revolution in character, it was proletarian by virtue of the leading role played in it by the working class and the means of fighting the autocracy, and (2) that the peasantry, who were one of the driving forces of that revolution, took the side of the proletariat and not of the capitalist class, as had happened in the bourgeois revolutions in the West. (3) Whereas two main classes—feudal aristocracy and the bourgeoisie—had fought for power in earlier bourgeois revolutions, in czarist Russia two social wars took place, as Lenin remarked, because of the new socio-economic circumstances. One war was for land, freedom and democracy, and the other, in the womb of the developing capitalist system, for a socialist restructuring of society. Both wars were led by the proletariat. (4) The working class of Russia had its own party, founded and led by Lenin, a genius of revolution.

All that put its stamp on the character of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia as a people's revolution, which could not be stopped half way and had to be taken further to the proletarian revolution.

The victory of the bourgeois revolution is impossible in our country *as the victory of the bourgeoisie*. This sounds paradoxical, but it is a fact. The preponderance of the peasant population, its terrible oppression by the semi-feudal big landowning system, the strength and class

¹ In the period between February and October 1917, Lenin wrote more than 250 theoretical articles in which he developed issues of the revolution and its road of development, of armed insurrection and peaceful winning of power by the proletariat, forms of establishing the new system, etc. They are a very rich treasury for the contemporary Communist movement.

consciousness of the proletariat already organised in a socialist party—all these circumstances impart to *our* bourgeois revolution a specific character¹

Czarist Russia was a country with a backward reactionary constitutional system. Lenin called it one of the oldest most powerful most barbarous and most brutal monarchies a prison of nations a country of lawlessness where despotism of the authorities reigned supreme. The Russian landowners and capitalist class served czarism faithfully and loyally. Seeing the autocracy as the best defender of their private vested interests which helped them keep the working masses under their thumb they shielded and protected it in every way and proclaimed the czarist throne holy and inviolable. The imperialists of other states who occupied many key positions in Russia's economy also had a vested interest in upholding the czarist system and helped the exploiter classes in every way to fight the revolution.

These home and international circumstances were the reason why the proletariat had to resort to force against the autocracy. For the Bolsheviks however insurrection was not an end in itself. Insurrection was only a component albeit a very important one of their strategic and tactical line at that time which envisaged a whole series of mass political actions. Lenin formulated and substantiated political slogans that were close to and understood by the people and led them straight to revolution. These slogans were the following: immediate introduction of the eight hour day the institution of revolutionary peasant committees to carry out democratic reforms in the countryside including confiscation of the landowners' lands the holding of mass political strikes arming of the workers and creation of a revolutionary army.

Lenin regarded the 1905-7 revolution as the prologue to new battles as a rehearsal for a really victorious revolution. The first Russian revolution did not lead to the implementation of democratic reforms but that was in no way evidence that the line of such reforms had no prospects.

Appraisal of the first world war that began in 1914 was of great importance for a correct determination of the prospects of the revolution. Considering it necessary to utilise it to overthrow the power of capital the Bolsheviks supplemented the slogan of an armed uprising with a call to convert the imperialist war into a civil war a call that fully accorded with the historical situation then prevailing since conversion of the imperialist war into a civil war was the sole way to stop the

¹ V I Lenin. The Assessment of the Russian Revolution. *Collected Works* Vol. 15, 1963, p. 56.

world carnage and attain victory of the working class over the capitalists. The other side of Lenin's activity consisted in activating the party's work and rallying and preparing the forces for a new revolution. The Bolsheviks' tactics were aimed at establishing links with various strata of the population and extending their influence in mass organizations. Without that preparatory stage the party could not have been primed to meet the period of revolutionary storms.¹

The Bolsheviks' efforts pursuing the right tactics bore fruit. Largely due to their work carried on with due allowance for all the changes in the situation, the masses were drawn more and more broadly into the impending bourgeois democratic revolution. In February 1917 czarism was overthrown.

The February Revolution, which implemented democratic reforms at the same time marked the beginning of the change of the revolution into a socialist one predicted by Lenin. After victory of the February Revolution Lenin developed a concrete plan in his works written while still in emigration and later in the famous April Theses for the passage from bourgeois democratic to socialist revolution.

Opportunists in the Second International and the Russian Mensheviks hastened (as we have already remarked above) to accuse Lenin of wanting to skip the capitalist stage of development in Russia, saying that scores of years of capitalist rule would be needed in Russia after the democratic revolution and a further maturing of the proletariat for the socialist revolution.

Today's anti-communists, reformists and right wing opportunists continue as the Mensheviks and the leaders of the Second International did to repeat arguments about the prematurity of the socialist revolution in Russia, which means to deny the continuity of the revolution and the patterns of its direct transition from the democratic stage to the socialist one. The arguments of those leaders of the working class movement who while quite rightly calling today for a struggle for democracy as a paramount task declare in advance that the issue of socialist transformations will only arise in the distant future, also lead in fact to denial of the possibility of such a transition, so too does their argument that we must wait for the time when the people themselves

¹ It is often said in Western literature that the objective and subjective conditions for a social revolution matured in Russia only during the world war, which only then provided a situation of national crisis. This thesis ignores the real facts of Russian history and contradicts all Lenin's activity for he had already developed the theory of the bourgeois-democratic revolution growing into a socialist one before the revolution of 1905.⁷

become convinced of the necessity to make these reforms and vote for socialism at the polls

The experience of the revolutionary struggle in Russia in the period between February and October 1917 exploded all these arguments. It was then that Lenin and the Bolsheviks demonstrated in practice that it was necessary to make the proletariat the predominant force to pursue this line in alliance with all the revolutionary forces and to decide the other issues arising in the transition period. A whole set of intricate questions arises in that connection. We shall touch on only four of them that are exceptionally topical and of the greatest interest in our day from the angle of the matters we are considering.

The party and Lenin decided the issue of choice of the moment for beginning the revolution from a thorough analysis of both the general and the concrete factors determining the development and maturity of the revolutionary situation. This analysis enabled Lenin to conclude that it was easier for the Russians than for the advanced countries *to begin* the great proletarian revolution.¹ In that connection he pointed out the following circumstances:

It was easier for us to begin firstly because the unusual—for twentieth-century Europe—political backwardness of the tsarist monarchy gave unusual strength to the revolutionary onslaught of the masses. Secondly, Russia's backwardness merged in a peculiar way the proletarian revolution against the bourgeoisie with the peasant revolution against the landowners. That is what we started from in October 1917 and we would not have achieved victory so easily then if we had not. As long ago as 1856 Marx spoke in reference to Prussia of the possibility of a peculiar combination of proletarian revolution and peasant war. From the beginning of 1905 the Bolsheviks advocated the idea of a revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry. Thirdly, the 1905 revolution contributed enormously to the political education of the worker and peasant masses because it familiarised their vanguard with the last word of socialism in the West and also because of the revolutionary *action* of the masses. Without such a dress rehearsal as we had in 1905 the revolutions of 1917—both the bourgeois February revolution and the proletarian October revolution—would have been impossible. Fourthly, Russia's geog-

¹ V. I. Lenin, *The Third International and its Place in History*, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 310.

raphical conditions permitted her to hold out longer than other countries could have done against the superior military strength of the capitalist advanced countries. Fifthly the specific attitude of the proletariat towards the peasantry facilitated the transition from the bourgeois revolution to the socialist revolution made it easier for the urban proletarians to influence the semi proletarian poorer sections of the rural working people. Sixthly long schooling in strike action and the experience of the European mass working-class movement facilitated the emergence—in a profound and rapidly intensifying revolutionary situation—of such a unique form of proletarian revolutionary organisation as the *Soviets*¹

Lenin did not set a concrete date for victory of the socialist revolution in Russia immediately after victory of the February Revolution. Only as the revolution came to a head did possible dates for making it become clear. A necessary precondition for deciding to launch the revolution then was a sober all round assessment of the conditions. In addition revolutionary courage was required and also staunchness, confidence in the correctness of the analysis and a high sense of responsibility.

In his polemic with Kautsky Lenin explained the stages of the revolution in Russia as follows:

Yes, our revolution is a bourgeois revolution *as long as we march with the peasants as a whole*. This has been as clear as clear can be to us: we have said it hundreds and thousands of times since 1905 and we have never attempted to skip this necessary stage of the historical process or abolish it by decrees. Kautsky's efforts to expose us on this point merely expose his own confusion of mind and his fear to recall what he wrote in 1905 when he was not yet a renegade.

Beginning with *April* 1917, however long before the October Revolution, that is long before we assumed power, we publicly declared and explained to the people the revolution cannot now stop at this stage for the country has marched forward; capitalism has advanced; ruin has reached fantastic dimensions which (whether one likes it or not) *will demand* steps forward *to socialism*. For there is *no* other way of advancing of saving the war weary country and of *alleviating* the sufferings of the working and exploited people.

¹ *Ibid.* pp 310-11

Things have turned out just as we said they would. The course taken by the revolution has confirmed the correctness of our reasoning. *First* with the whole of the peasants against the monarchy against the landowners against medievalism (and to that extent the revolution remains bourgeois bourgeois democratic). *Then*, with the poor peasants with the semi proletarians with all the exploited *against capitalism*, including the rural rich the kulaks the profiteers and to that extent the revolution becomes a *socialist* one. To attempt to raise an artificial Chinese Wall between the first and second to separate them *by anything else* than the degree of preparedness of the proletariat and the degree of its unity with the poor peasants means to distort Marxism dreadfully to vulgarise it to substitute liberalism in its place. It means smuggling in a reactionary defence of the bourgeoisie against the socialist proletariat by means of quasi scientific references to the progressive character of the bourgeoisie in comparison with medievalism.¹

Victory of the February revolution did not lead to the establishment of a single power of the proletariat and peasantry. None of the classes that came to power at almost the same time possessed it fully. Along with the Provisional Government which was a dictatorship of the exploiting classes the rebelling workers and soldiers set up Soviets whose class essence was dictatorship of the working class and peasantry. But because of the petty bourgeois element which swamped the proletariat and because of the change in the latter's make up during the war and for certain other reasons, the greater part of the Soviets were in the hands of Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries² who voluntarily ceded power to the bourgeois Provisional Government.

By analysing the involved contradictory situation created in the country Lenin concluded that the bourgeois democratic revolution was completed even though it had not been marked by realisation of the Bolsheviks' slogan of a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry. From now on the job was to move ahead *to* the socialist revolution by which power should pass to the working class and the poorest strata of the peasantry.

The third lesson that the international revolutionary move

¹ V I Lenin *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky* *Collected Works* Vol 28 pp 299-300

² The Socialist Revolutionary Party was a left wing middle class democratic party that existed in Russia in the period from 1901 to 1923.

ment draws from the experience of the revolution in Russia is the need of a tactic of rapidly and opportunely changing revolutionary slogans and of great flexibility in tackling the concrete tasks of the revolutionary struggle and choosing of ways of dealing with them and of combining peaceful and non peaceful means of struggle

The Bolsheviks built their tactics in accordance with the situation prevailing in Russia. Lenin said that it was impossible after the February revolution to overthrow the Provisional Government by armed means in the situation of dual power because to do so also meant to go against the Soviets which being then in the hands of Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries had made an agreement with the bourgeois government and were supporting it

In Western capitalist and reformist literature one finds statements that Lenin's speech at the First Congress of Soviets in June 1917 on the Bolsheviks' readiness to take power was not quite responsible. ¹ e did not take the real situation into account. In support of that it is alleged that the preconditions for the proletariat's seizing power were not then ripe

This is an exceptionally important point the more so that certain characteristic features of the situation in Russia in June 1917 could arise as well as historical experience has shown in other countries making the transition to socialism. The fact is that Russia was experiencing a very severe economic and political crisis at the time the First Congress of Soviets was held. Lenin and the Bolsheviks as true patriots of their country wanted to pull it out of the crisis and save it from national catastrophe and moreover by the least painful means possible. Were there the conditions for that in June? There certainly were

(1) Russia had reached the economic level of development necessary both to establish a democratic system and for it to develop gradually into a socialist one

(2) There were real agencies of power in the Soviets though they were then in the hands of Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries. Passage of full power to them in the country therefore did not imply establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It would have been a dictatorship of the working class and peasantry but it would undoubtedly have facilitated preparation of the conditions needed in order to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat

(3) The armed workers and the army were on the side of the Soviets.¹ The capitalists would not have dared act

¹ This fact was also of great importance because around 14 million peasants had been mobilised for the army during the war

against them and would have been forced to submit to them

(4) There were democratic freedoms in the country such as had never existed in the most democratic capitalist republics of the time That enabled the Bolsheviks to carry on broad mass work and openly organise the forces of the masses to fight for continuation of the revolution and to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat

(5) The existence of broad democratic freedoms provided the conditions not just for a peaceful passage of power from the Provisional Government to the Soviets but also for the party struggle within the Soviets after transfer of power to them to continue as peaceably and painlessly as possible As Lenin wrote

There is a degree of freedom now in Russia that enables the will of the majority to be gauged by the make up of the Soviets Therefore to make a serious not a Blanquist bid for power the proletarian party must *fight for influence within the Soviets* ¹

Thus in the first months after the February bourgeois democratic revolution and the rise of dual power in Russia there were all the chances for peaceful development of the revolution Those who say that Lenin was rash in announcing the Bolsheviks readiness to take power either do not understand one point or do not want to In June 1917 Lenin was not posing the issue of some kind of coup d'état or of the immediate granting of power by the First Congress of Soviets because there were only 105 Bolsheviks among the 1090 delegates at it The Bolsheviks of course had no illusions They were insisting that the working class should take on responsibility for the fate of the country and carry out measures that would be real steps toward the socialist goal though would not yet mean the introduction of socialism let alone communism And in June the Bolsheviks were not demanding power exclusively for themselves though they spoke of their readiness to take office They were demanding that an All Russia Soviet of Workers Soldiers and Peasants Deputies should take power That is to say the Bolsheviks allowed for the then balance of power and were agreed to the creation of a government accountable to the Soviets even if it consisted solely of Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries without their own participation In other words the Bolsheviks were ready for an agreement or a compromise and it was not a question then (in June) of

¹ V I Lenin How a Simple Question Can Be Confused *Collected Works*, Vol 24 p 217

establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat but of a dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry

How did Lenin conceive the development of the revolution *into a socialist one then?* He *considered a peaceful* development of the revolution possible peaceful election of deputies by the people peaceful struggle of the parties within the Soviets and agitation directly among the masses for immediate satisfaction of the people's urgent demands by the new government. The Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries *being faithful servants of the capitalist class* would undoubtedly have held back the introduction of radical revolutionary reforms and pursued a line of curtailing the revolution. They would thus have exposed themselves to the broad working masses. The people would have driven them out of the Soviets and sent Bolsheviks to them staunch consistent defenders of the interests of the masses. In such circumstances the Soviets would have been converted from Menshevik Socialist Revolutionary to Bolshevik ones and a Soviet Government would have been formed from the Bolsheviks and their supporters which would have meant establishment of the power of the working class and a change of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry into a socialist dictatorship of the proletariat.

As we see Lenin approached his declaration to the First Congress of Soviets in a responsible way and made good allowance for the real conditions of June 1917. At the same time the Bolsheviks prepared to seize power by armed means. Lenin considered arming of the proletariat a *sine qua non* both for ensuring success in peaceful development of the revolution (pressure from below) and for overthrowing capitalist domination arms in hand if the proletariat should be forced to change its tactics as in fact happened. They therefore did everything to build Red Guard detachments in fighting trim alongside the revolutionised army and to organise the proletarian and semi proletarian element in the countryside. And the masses began to swing to the Bolsheviks.

In connection with the tactic of peaceful development of the revolution advanced by the Bolsheviks the slogan of converting the imperialist war into a civil war had to be shelved. In this period of the revolution Lenin wrote the civil war as far as we are concerned turns into peaceful prolonged and patient class propaganda.¹

The peaceful period of the Russian revolution continued *until the dispersal of the workers and soldiers demonstration*

¹ V I Lenin The Seventh (April) All Russia Conference of the R S D L P (B) April 24-29 (May 7 12) 1917 Collected Works Vol 24 p 236

in Petrograd on 3 July 1917 It was ended not by the Bolsheviks but by the capitalist class and by the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries who converted the Soviets into an appendage of the Provisional Government and encouraged the firing on the July demonstration

After that event dual power was ended in Russia the reactionary capitalist class seized power and the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries who dominated the Soviets handed government of the country wholly over to it

The new political situation created in the country required the Bolsheviks to change the tactics pursued before the July days This responsible task was fulfilled by the 6th Party Congress held in late September early August 1917

The Congress backed Lenin's line on victory of socialism in one country and his practical plan for developing the bourgeois democratic revolution into a socialist one The Congress guided by the pointers in his various articles like *The Political Situation* and *On Slogans* called on the revolutionary people to answer the capitalists' violence with force and to seize power by insurrection The slogan 'All Power to the Soviets' was temporarily withdrawn because the Soviets had been made a powerless appendage of the counter revolution by their Socialist Revolutionary Menshevik leadership The line was to convert the imperialist war into a civil war

After the 6th Congress the Bolsheviks vigorously began preparations for an uprising A Bolshevisation of the Soviets began and there was a sharp turn of the broad urban and rural masses towards Lenin's party The Provisional Government exposed itself by not implementing its promises to the working people The law on the land was not promulgated When the peasants began to set up land committees so as to share out land among the poor the committees were arrested

The stormy process of Bolshevising of the Soviets helped the Bolsheviks to put the slogan 'All Power to the Soviets' onto the agenda again While advancing this slogan once more Lenin (we must stress) repeatedly pointed out the desirability of peaceful development of the revolution In his article *The Russian Revolution and Civil War* published in the newspaper *Workers Path* on 16 (29 by the old style Julian Calendar still in use in Russia at that time) September he wrote

If an alliance between the city workers and the poor peasantry can be effected through an immediate transfer of power to the Soviets so much the better The

Bolsheviks will do *everything* to ensure this *peaceful* development of the revolution ¹

A few days later in the same paper in an article entitled *The Tasks of the Revolution* Lenin stressed with new force that

our business is to help get everything possible done to make sure the last chance for a peaceful development of the revolution to help by the presentation of our programme by making clear its national character its absolute accord with the interests and demands of a vast majority of the population

The last time Lenin wrote on the desirability of employing peaceful means to win was 24 days before the beginning of the armed uprising In a famous letter to the Central Committee and the Petrograd and Moscow Committees and the Bolshevik members of the Petrograd and Moscow Soviets dated 1 October (old style) 1917 he said

It may very well be that right now power can be achieved without insurrection for example if the Moscow Soviet were to take power at once immediately and proclaim itself (together with the Petrograd Soviet) the government Victory in Moscow is guaranteed and there is no need to fight Petrograd can wait The government cannot do anything to save itself it will surrender ³

All that demonstrates once again how flexibly, and without stereotypes Lenin was able to shape revolutionary tactics how persistently he fought to exploit all the conditions for a bloodless victory of the socialist revolution But this time too the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries did every thing they could to concentrate power in the hands of the capitalist class which took steps to suppress and defeat the revolution The proletariat therefore had to act arms in hand in order to gain its ends acting in the interests of the overwhelming majority of the population and to establish Soviet power by means of an uprising And in fact the October Revolution was carried out without much bloodshed (It is estimated that around 50 persons were killed and wounded in Petrograd during the uprising)

The proletariat was ensured a comparatively easy bloodless victory by the immense work put in by the Bolshevik Party in

¹ *Collected Works*, Vol 26 p 41

² *Ibid.* p 60

³ *Ibid.*, p 141

the preceding stages thanks to which the masses organised in the Soviets acted consciously boldly and resolutely while the enemy the capitalist class was—as Lenin said— weakened by intrigue undermined and eroded like an ice floe in the spring flood by the long political period from February to October and already lacked inner strength

The fourth lesson of the October Revolution was the need for a simultaneous combination of democratic and socialist aims in the socialist revolution During the October Revolution not only did socialist tasks have to be tackled but simultaneously as well the many issues of the democratic revolution that could not be coped with either in the 1905 7 revolution or the February revolution of 1917

We must touch specially on the point of the democratic character of the October Revolution since one of the arguments that capitalist and reformist interpreters of this revolution rely on is (as we have already said above) the allegation that it was a revolution at the top made without the involvement of and even against the will of the people and that the dictatorship of the proletariat was forcibly imposed by the Bolsheviks This interpretation moreover is aimed at proving that revolution and democracy are in general opposed to each other in any country and at all times

This thesis is moss grown Kautsky denying the democratic character of the October Revolution had already tried to deny the democratic nature of the Great October Revolution alleging that this revolution should be treated as a coup d etat and not a socialist revolution¹ Today too reformist ideologists playing 'variations in every key on the theme of the undemocratic character of the October Revolution try to prove that the road of social progress in today's world lies in a different direction to that followed by the revolution in Russia It is their invention for example that the October Revolution broke off and frustrated Russia's democratic development that had been begun by the February revolution In their view the Provisional Government was very nearly a model regime while the October Revolution was its negation

What is one to say about these statements?

It is true that the people won political freedoms in the bourgeois democratic revolution that there had not been in Russia before Lenin remarked that the revolution of February 1917 has toppled the autocracy and has given the Russian people unprecedented freedom which is unmatched among any people of the world² At the same time he saw in

¹ See Karl Kautsky *Die Diktatur des Proletariats* (Verlag der Wiener Volksbuchhandlung Ignaz Brand & Co Wien 1918)

² V I Lenin Report on the Results of the Seventh (April) All Russia

the democracy won in March relative and partial freedom¹ There were more than enough grounds for such a characterisation because the democratic regime established by a bourgeois revolution was nevertheless precisely bourgeois democracy which was constantly reflected in both the substance and the forms of its activity

We shall begin with the point that several of the people's most urgent demands remained unsatisfied in a country with freedoms that were the maximum by the standards then prevailing Nothing was being done to stop the war and make peace on which the overwhelming majority and certainly the masses of the working people were insisting The agrarian problem was not being tackled and the peasantry—the overwhelming majority of the population of Russia choked by need and complete dependence on the landowners—were in fact deprived of the most elementary democratic rights while their attempts to alter the position somehow were ruthlessly suppressed The government was also blocking meeting of the industrial proletariat's most urgent demands such as the introduction of an eight hour day Finally the right of nations to self determination was not even recognised on paper and any active expression of the national interests of the non Russian population was banned and punished Lenin pointed out the hypocritical character of the Provisional Government's policy in this connection which was suppressing these nations' aspirations for national emancipation in the name of democracy²

Even if we are thinking of such elements of democracy as freedom of speech press assembly street demonstrations etc the Provisional Government's regime in regard to them was far from what it is represented in the West Brutal reprisals meted out against the workers' democratic actions in April 1917 the numerous bans on peaceful demonstrations the persecution of Bolsheviks and arrests of their leaders after the July events which did not cease during the whole period from February to October and the raids on the presses of the Bolshevik newspapers do not fit very well into the concepts of liberalism and democracy which (according to the falsifiers of the history of 1917) knew no limitations in the post February period

In fact every time that consistent realisation of political

Conference of the R S D L P (B) at a Meeting of the Petrograd Organisation May 8(21) 1917 *Collected Works* Vol 41 p 432

¹ V I Lenin Draft Theses March 4(17) 1917 *Collected Works* Vol 23 p 290

² See V I Lenin It is Undemocratic Citizen Kerensky! *Collected Works*, Vol 24 p 568

freedoms contradicted the interests of the ruling exploiter classes acute crises broke out in the development of the revolution crises of the dual system of power and crises of the whole of post February democracy

That all helps make clear the triple role of the October Revolution in regard to democracy (1) The socialist revolution blocked the Provisional Government's plans aimed at a further curtailing of political freedoms in the country It smashed the bourgeois state machinery and prevented the establishing of a military dictatorship which was already being openly called for by reaction at the end of October for example at the 2nd Congress of bourgeois public figures in Moscow

(2) The working class power established by the October Revolution immediately carried out the most democratic reforms that had been expected in vain from the Provisional Government and from the capitalist and conciliatory parties that succeeded one another in office By its Decree on Peace the Soviet state decisively laid the foundations for meeting the people's most important democratic demand in practice not only in Russia but also in all other countries forcibly dragged into the imperialist war by their governments

The medieval obstructions in the social and political affairs of the country i.e. landlord property rights national oppression the privileges of the church the denial of rights to women the humiliated position of the working man were swept away by the socialist revolution All these long matured issues of the democratic renewal of Russian society were decided by the October Revolution in passing as Lenin wrote as a by product of our main and genuinely proletarian-revolutionary socialist activities ¹

(3) Finally the radical restructuring of socio-economic relations begun by the October Revolution on the one hand put a material foundation under implementation of the democratic rights of the working people proclaimed by law and on the other hand prepared the ground for asserting freedoms unknown in public affairs under capitalism above all freedom from the exploitation of man by man The October Revolution thus not only confirmed democracy in society's political affairs but for the first time in human history democratised its basis i.e. the sphere of socio-economic relations

Thus while it is true in principle that democracy has ceased to exist with victory of the socialist revolution in the form it had taken under the Provisional Government that by no

¹ V I Lenin Fourth Anniversary of the October Revolution *Collected Works* Vol 33 p 54

means signifies that the October Revolution was some sort of negation of the democratic gains of the February revolution. On the contrary they were maintained developed and deepened by the Soviet government and at the same time given a new content hitherto unknown in history.

The point about the relation between the masses independent revolutionary constructive activity and the organising activity of the political vanguard of the working class is inseparable from that of the democratic character of the socialist revolution. Western writers endeavour to deal with this matter as regards the October Revolution by an elementary formula according to which the February revolution was (they say) the result of a spontaneous elemental movement of the people and an unorganised action of the masses while the October Revolution was a matter allegedly of a narrow organised group of Bolsheviks acting without a popular mandate and without reliance on popular initiative that is to say completely spontaneous on the one hand and fully organised on the other. Hence they conclude the democratism of the masses was suppressed in October by Bolshevik organisation.

What drives people who call themselves historians to clutch persistently in spite of widely published incontrovertible documentary evidence at the fable of February spontaneity without Bolsheviks? Those of course who thereby give themselves the chance once more to exploit the trick of opposing October to February in a system of arguments that allege an unpopular origin of the Soviet government and the undemocratic character of the October Revolution. The same idea is given additional points by the pens of reformists about the Bolsheviks betrayal of Marxism since they are said to have furtively slipped in a theory of artificial forcible undemocratic propagation of socialism in a society resisting it in place of Marx's theory of socialism as a natural product of class struggle.

That is how the ideological opponents of Marxism Leninism gabble. But here is what the real history of the October Revolution has to say.

The eight months between the bourgeois democratic and the socialist revolution were characterised by a steady growth of the organisation of the masses of the working people and the popular revolutionary forces. The Bolshevik Party made an immense contribution to that by knowing how to ensure conscious responsible involvement of advanced workers soldiers and sailors peasants and intellectuals in purposive revolutionary work. It is an incontrovertible truth that victory of the working class would have been impossible without the fighting political organisation that Lenin had been forging for

decades and that the country would not have been rescued from national catastrophe

The period just before October was a time of mass revolutionary activity on a scale unprecedented since February. A powerful strike movement developed in the autumn which grew at every step into the setting up of workers' administrations in factories or to actual transfer of local power to the strike committees to the Soviets. In September and October the peasants' movement, agrarian disorders, attained the scale and tension of a real uprising of the labouring countryside. Army units sometimes joined the insurrectionary peasants as well. A wave of soldiers' protests against continuation of the war swept the front. The soldiers demanded peace and constantly tried to fraternise (the number of cases of fraternisation in October was five times that in September). The army in fact ceased to be obedient and the military authorities and the officers lost control of it.

The October armed uprising was based consequently on the support of both the organised and the spontaneous movement of the masses. Not everyone involved in this movement consciously followed the Bolsheviks, nor were all of them members of Bolshevik organisations. But on the whole they constituted a socio-political force of the revolution that already enjoyed preponderant influence in the country on the eve of October and gave the subsequent revolution the character of revolutionary force of the popular, i.e. democratic majority against the exploiters, i.e. anti-democratic minority.

The initiative of the masses was thus combined with organising revolutionary work in both the February revolution and the October insurrection. As for the difference between February and October in this respect, it is that the independent political and social activity of the people had risen significantly at the time the socialist revolution was made and the organisation of the working class and working people led by Lenin's party had risen to a higher degree.

Another thesis that has been in the armoury of our critics for a long time is the following: the Bolsheviks were guilty of not having taken the will of the people as expressed through the ballot box at elections into account during preparation for the October Revolution, during the insurrection itself and during the consolidation of the Soviet government. Western capitalist and reformist ideologists assume that this is the most sensitive and vulnerable point to concentrate on so as to expose the original sin of anti-democratism inherent in the Bolsheviks. But let us look at the facts of history.

The tempestuous history of 1917 is full of election campaigns, elections and voting of resolutions at meetings.

and gatherings. An extraordinary set of elected public administrative bodies was born on the wave of revolutionary upsurge—central and local trade union and workshop—bodies invested with certain authority or simply public political forums expressing the mood of the currents represented in them. In the months after the February revolution elections and re-elections were held to the Soviets of Workers, Soldiers and Peasants, Deputies to all Russia congresses of Soviets to city and district dumas to Zemstvo assemblies i.e. to local government bodies retained from czarist times and to factory and army committees.

The falsifiers would like to create the impression (1) that the Bolsheviks were irreconcilable opponents of this election activity of the masses and (2) that the general results of the voting invariably went against them.

But how did matters in fact stand?

Let us look first at the local authorities that were re-elected over quite a long period from May to September 1917. In the first elections—for the Petrograd district (borough) dumas (27 May—5 June) the Bolsheviks got 19.4 per cent of the vote. In the elections for the Moscow City Duma on 25 June they got 11 per cent. In the elections for the Petrograd City Duma (two months after the borough duma elections) the Bolsheviks' percentage of the vote had risen to 33.5 per cent. In Moscow in the September elections the swing was even more impressive: 51 per cent of voters supporting Bolshevik candidates.

Let us look now at how matters stood with the elections to trade union and workshop organisations. At the Third All Russia Conference of Trade Unions (21–28 June) there were 73 Bolshevik delegates (more than the Menshevik and Socialist Revolutionary delegates put together). In the factory committees the Bolsheviks had an absolute majority from their very inception after the February revolution. In the new elections for army committees held in September and October 1917 the Bolsheviks got such a number of votes that it could be said with confidence that 40 per cent of the army followed them. In the Baltic Fleet and on the Northern and Western Fronts the Bolsheviks had an absolute majority.

Finally take the Soviets of Deputies. At the elections for these main agencies of people's government born of the revolution the number of votes cast for Bolsheviks rose steadily. At the First All Russia Congress of Soviets (June 1917) the Bolshevik group of delegates numbered 13 per cent; at the Second Congress (October) 51 per cent; and at the Third Congress (January 1918) 61 per cent.

All these figures if examined objectively and closely convincingly demonstrate that the general trend of the

public's electoral activity was in favour of not against the Bolsheviks

The experience of 1917 is that it is impossible to win a revolution if the leadership wavers and is indecisive if it does not have very broad support and does not act circumspectly and coolly and if it does not fight with firm resolution to the victorious end united with singleness of purpose with selfless heroism and ruthlessly ousting waverers

Such are some of the points that characterise the features of the party's tactics in the fight to overthrow czarism and abolish capitalism

4 Features of the Revolution in Various Countries

Just as in Russia the proletariat in all countries taking the road to socialism has had a dominant position marching in alliance with other strata of the working people above all the peasantry and led by Marxist Leninist parties It has been characteristic of these countries that the democratic and socialist revolutions developed simultaneously within the context of a single revolutionary process Liberation from fascism meant solution of the tasks of the national democratic revolution Then during the class struggle and gradual implementing of a whole set of socio economic and socio-political reforms and the onset of a period of transition from capitalism to socialism during consolidation of people's power and of the guiding role of the working class the people's democratic revolution changed into a socialist one

Experience also confirmed the need to allow for these countries' special conditions at the time of the revolutions and for the new developments in the international situation which can be reduced to three main points

First of all the revolutions developed in historical situations in which there was the Soviet Union whose peoples had demonstrated in practice the superiority of the socialist system over capitalism That had an enormous effect on all social development in the world on consolidation of the democratic forces and on the rallying of the masses of the working people to the ideas of socialism

Furthermore many of the revolutions occurred in situations in which the Soviet Army had defeated the fascist armies in Europe and the Japanese militarists in Asia which contributed largely to an upsurge of the revolutionary movement and weakening of internal reaction in countries taking the socialist road The existence of a powerful socialist state close to them was a guarantee against intervention by the imperialists The

Soviet Union also gave the people's democracies great economic political diplomatic and moral support

These special features were also governed by the economic and political shifts that took place in the capitalist world shifts that were characterised by an intensification of the crisis of capitalism and a sharpening both of interimperialist contradictions and of the contradictions between the monopoly capitalists and the broad masses of the people which substantially weakened the enemy's position. The mounting waves of the national liberation movement in the 1940s and 1950s in Asia and Africa and the upsurge of the democratic anti imperialist struggle in Latin America were also of great importance

All these circumstances put their stamp on the course and character of the revolutions on the balance of the class forces operating in them on their activity and so on. On each continent and in each country the revolutions had their own specific features

Let us examine the special features of the revolutions in Central and South Eastern Europe remembering our main theme

As we have already remarked the distinguishing feature of the revolutions in these countries was the fact that they had an anti fascist and national liberation character right from the beginning. Although they were faced with a struggle against internal reaction the brunt of this fight was directed initially against the fascist yoke. Since the landowners and the financial and industrial capitalists had been the basis of the occupation and profascist regimes the people in avenging themselves on fascism avenged themselves at the same time on its local accomplices. The revolutions dealt with the anti feudal and other democratic tasks while doing the main job i.e. overthrowing fascist domination

The aims of the proletariat in the revolutionary movement also determined the forms of its struggle. The regimes set up by fascism could not be abolished by peaceful means. Bitter class struggle and its sharpest form armed insurrection were what decided matters in favour of the working people

The armed insurrections in the countries of Central and South Eastern Europe won out in 1944-5. The working class headed by Communist Parties played the dominant role in these revolutions which had a democratic national liberation character. The uprisings were directed against the fascist enslavers and their supporters within the countries the collaborationist bourgeoisie and big landowners. Because not only the working class and labouring peasantry but also the intellectuals the petty bourgeoisie and certain of the middle strata suffered from fascist oppression. They too took a

direct part in the fight for national emancipation. That broadened the social basis of the revolutions and distinguished them in many respects from the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia in which the liberal bourgeoisie had strained for agreement with the czarist autocracy.

It is necessary when discussing the special features of these revolutions to note that they were not of the same order in all European countries. In Bulgaria for instance the revolution was a socialist one in character in contrast to the others. That was connected with the special features of Bulgaria's historical development and the fact that the bourgeoisie there had proved incapable of taking part in the democratic movement. As a result of the uprising of 9 September 1944 which set itself anti-fascist, anti-imperialist and national liberation tasks, power passed in fact at the centre and in the localities into the hands of the working class allied with the masses of the working people to the Committees of the Fatherland Front in which the Communist Party of Bulgaria played the guiding role. The revolution replaced the fascist dictatorship by people's democratic power which in fact exercised the function of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

A general feature of these revolutions was the peaceful character in the main of the victory of the dictatorship of the proletariat (with the exception of Bulgaria). After the revolutionary upheavals resulting from the defeat of the German fascist invaders the working class with Communist Parties at its head won firm political positions. By basing itself on the movement of the popular masses and consolidating the alliance with the working peasantry and by utilising that part of the state machine that proved to be in its hands through victory of the democratic revolution the working class was able to win one position after another and ensure peaceful development of the democratic revolution into a socialist one. This change was effected through bitter class struggle.

The victory of these socialist revolutions demonstrated once more that the proletariat has every chance of getting the better of the capitalist class in its country by peaceful means if the capitalists do not get help from their fellows in other countries.

An important general feature of the revolutions in the European people's democracies was that separate socialist tasks began to be tackled immediately after victory of the democratic revolution and not after establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat as had happened in Russia. These measures included in particular the nationalising of several industries, the introduction of elements of planning

the organisation of control over capitalist firms commercial operations and the carrying out of a number of reforms (of the courts taxation policy election law and so on)

A special feature was that the smashing of the old state machine and the building of a new public administration took place gradually the old bottles of public administration were often used being filled with new wine by the working class

These people's democratic revolutions also differed in the composition of the class forces involved in them In Russia the socialist revolution had been carried out by the working class in alliance with the poorest peasants who constituted the overwhelming majority of the population In Central and South Eastern Europe the working class made the revolution in alliance with broader masses of the peasantry including middling farmers This put its stamp on the character of the agrarian reforms there which differed from what was done in Soviet Russia

Finally when speaking of the general features of these revolutions we must not forget the following very important circumstance namely that their success was guaranteed by there being unity of the ranks of the working class During the years of fascist occupation organisational co-operation of the left and democratic parties and groups had already been established in the form of national associations

The proletariat formed the backbone and leading force of the national fronts During the struggle the Communist Parties had succeeded in exposing the right wing opportunist leaders of Social Democracy and in isolating them from the working class in preparing the ground for and then uniting with the Social Democratic Parties on a principled basis of Marxism Leninism The united trade union movement which was led by Communist and Workers Parties was also of immense significance for unity of the working class

The fact that there were a number of common features in the revolutions in Central and South Eastern Europe in no way means that the revolutionary reforms in them were identical On the contrary each revolution had its own peculiarities and its own specific features Only by allowing for them were the Communists able to find the right road to establishing people's power In doing so they constructively utilised the experience of the October Revolution in Russia though by no means striving to copy it blindly

The revolution in Czechoslovakia for example had quite a few special features It was already a developed capitalist country before World War II with a numerous organised working class and strong parliamentary traditions all of which determined the forms and methods of the Czechoslovak working class's fight for dictatorship of the proletariat

Through victory of the national democratic revolution power passed to the government of the National Front in which Communists had the leading role the working class did not have full power then however and was forced to share it temporarily with the capitalist class

Allowing for the existing situation the Communist Party took decisive steps to rally all patriotic forces around the working class for victorious development of the people's democratic revolution into a socialist one and for winning of full power by the working class. The government passed a law on the initiative of the Communists nationalising the banks mines and large scale industry. More than 60 per cent of the country's industry passed into the public sector. In the countryside an agrarian reform was carried out in the implementing of which the agricultural workers and small and middling farmers united in peasant commissions took a very active part. There was a gradual elimination of the old state machinery and creation of the main elements of a new people's machinery. The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia carried out all these measures and others by peaceful means broadly employing the National Assembly. But use of the Assembly in the fight to turn the people's democratic revolution into a socialist one did not mean that socialism came to Czechoslovakia solely by way of parliament. The starting point of the fight for socialism there was the revolutionary reforms carried out by the people after liberation of the country from fascism. In its activity the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia relied on the working class the working peasantry and other strata of the working people and immediately organised and mobilised them to fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

In spite of the fact that reaction did everything it could to unleash civil war it did not succeed in doing so. Fearing that people would finally reject it in the elections in 1948 reaction tried to carry out a counter revolutionary coup d'etat in February 1948. This attempt was foiled by the working class led by the Communist Party and foiled moreover without the firing of a single shot. While observing the parliamentary norms and traditions that had previously existed in Czechoslovakia the Communist Party got the National Assembly to adopt a programme drafted by the government. The process of transforming the national democratic revolution into a socialist one was completed in the main by that victory and the road opened to the building of socialism.

A feature of the revolution in Poland was that the tackling of socio-economic and political matters was closely linked with ensuring the country's independence and sovereignty. The Soviet Army's decisive contribution to the liberation of

Poland helped overcome Poles hostility to Russia long cultivated by the ruling circles and strengthened the conviction that the nation's independence and prosperity were linked with socialism. The economic and political development of the western lands restored to Poland also played an important role while development of the people's national self awareness through the fight for democratic reforms helped the working class defeat reaction. This process was expressed primarily in the advances of the Polish Workers Party. The merging of the working class parties into the Polish United Workers Party was decisive for the transition in 1948 to the stage of building socialism.

Development of the revolution in the eastern part of Germany was closely interwoven with the fight against fascism. Since broad strata of the middle and petty bourgeoisie had been under Nazi influence for a long time it took an exceptionally sharp struggle to draw the majority of the people to the anti fascist democratic bloc. In the elections of the autumn of 1946 the Socialist Unity Party of Germany had already received around half the votes cast. In the spring of 1948 revolutionary reforms were carried out that led to the building of a democratic system. The most important were the land reform, the transfer of businesses and enterprises of war criminals and active members of the Nazi Party to public ownership and the de nazification of all spheres of life. These reforms were a further development, the change to a socialist system took the road of consolidating the public sector of the economy, going over to long term planning, broadening of democratic administrative bodies and carrying out other measures of a democratic character.

In Hungary the people's democratic revolution developed in the autumn of 1944 on the territory already liberated. Workers and peasants power was established in the country with the formation of a Provisional National Government in December 1944. This government was based on a broad network of national committees. The political parties were united in the Hungarian National Independence Front which was essentially a broad class alliance of the working class, the peasantry, the petty urban bourgeoisie, democratically minded intellectuals and the part of the capitalist class that had opposed the German fascists. Subsequently when representatives of reaction penetrated the National Front, the Communists created a Left Bloc in March 1946 which consolidated unity of the working class and its alliance with the peasantry.

The left forces having routed reaction's conspiracy at the end of 1946 won at the polls in 1947. In June 1948 the working class's parties were united. The formation of Hungarian

Working People's Party was the final stage in the socialist revolution in the political field. Working class power was established.

The revolution followed a peculiar course in Romania. There the democratic revolution began with an armed uprising of the people that overthrew the military fascist dictatorship on 23 August 1944 and a stubborn struggle was launched against the capitalist landowner government. During this struggle, which was headed by the Communist Party, a National Democratic Front was formed that united the democratic parties and groupings and was led by Communists. Under the party's leadership the masses of the people seized the local organs of power by force and put their own representatives at their head. Through factory committees actively operating in industrial enterprises and peasant committees in the villages the Communists foiled the capitalist landowner governing bodies' reactionary measures and carried out important political and economic measures of a democratic character, one of which was the seizure and sharing out of land. On 6 March 1945 people's democratic power was established in Romania through the action of the broad popular masses headed by the working class. In the democratic government set up on this basis Communists had a decisive voice. In 1948, after the removal of the last representatives of the capitalists from the government, abolition of the monarchy and proclamation of a people's republic, a new socialist stage of the revolution began.

In Yugoslavia new authorities had already been set up during the national liberation struggle, which was led by Communists. Power of the working class and peasantry was established through victory over fascism and unification of the country. In 1945-6 radical socio-economic reforms were carried out, including nationalisation of industry, the banks and transport, which laid the foundations for socialist development of the country.

In Albania the national liberation struggle during World War II was a civil war in a certain sense, with a distinctly expressed class character. The defeat of reaction led to power of the democratic forces. The tasks of the first stage of the people's democratic revolution had already been decided in the main by the beginning of 1946.

The revolutions in European countries indicate the diversity of the roads and methods of social transformations. At the same time they quite obviously confirm the general patterns of the revolutionary process and express the general trends of its development that are inevitably manifested in any situation, however specific they may be. Study of the twentieth-century revolutions in Asian countries, where the

revolutionary movement developed along its own specific roads leads to the same conclusion

The Asian countries in which the people's democratic and socialist revolutions have been victorious had in the past been in colonial or semi colonial dependencies. The predominant relations of production in them had been feudal so that the revolutions had an anti imperialist anti feudal character their main content was the agrarian question. They were not however ordinary bourgeois democratic revolutions. Their difference from the anti-colonial revolutions in such countries as for example India and Indonesia was that the dominant role in them was not played by the national bourgeoisie but primarily by the working strata of the people i.e. the working class and peasantry and that the multimillion masses of the peasantry and other democratic strata dissatisfied with the colonial and feudal regime were united under the leadership of Communist Parties.

The development of the revolutions in each of these countries also had its own special features.

Let us look at Mongolia where there was no working class before the revolution and where the revolutionary movement was headed by a non proletarian party. The Mongolian revolution showed that when such a party expresses the radical interests of the masses of the people properly understands Marxist Leninist theory and boldly applies it in the conditions of pre-capitalist relations it can become the guiding organising force in the development of its country along the road to socialism. By basing itself on the experience of the eastern republics of the USSR and an analysis of the political and economic situation in the country and allowing for the immense significance of the close links established with the Soviet Union the Third Congress of the Mongolian National Revolutionary Party held in 1924 recognised the non-capitalist path of development as the sole one acceptable and proper for Mongolia. The country has successfully followed this road. Its experience had fully confirmed that a peasantry that has achieved state power can master the ideas of the dictatorship of the proletariat and apply them under the leadership of its own Marxist Leninist party even in the most involved specific conditions of any country's historical development.

An important distinctive feature of the people's revolution in China was the fact that its participants included in addition to the working people the national bourgeoisie, various democratically minded elements and groups. By using their discontent with the oppression of foreign imperialists and local compradore elements and feudal lords the Communist Party attracted these sections to the side of the revolutionary people and this no

doubt facilitated the development of the revolution and gave it greater scope. In China the bourgeois democratic revolution grew into a socialist one peacefully i.e. in the same way as in the European people's democracies. The Chinese national bourgeoisie had joined the people which helped strengthen the political alliance during the revolution that triumphed in 1949.

The Soviet Army's defeat of Japanese militarism opened the road to freedom, democracy and socialism for the people of Korea, but the partition of the country determined the character of the subsequent tackling of the tasks of revolutionary development. The Workers' Party of Korea posed the following militant task: in order to build a fully independent democratic state by exploiting the favourable conditions created by the Soviet Army in the north of the country to convert it into a powerful revolutionary democratic base and to mobilise all the South Korean patriotic democratic forces against the American imperialists' policy of colonial enslavement of the country.¹ An expression of this policy was the setting up of the Provisional National Committee of North Korea in February 1946 as an authority based on an alliance of workers and peasants with the working class in the leading role and relying on the united democratic national front which united the broad anti-imperialist, anti-feudal democratic forces of the country. This body fulfilled the function of a dictatorship of people's democracy.²

In the very first stage of the revolution the people's power carried out simultaneous anti-feudal and socialist reforms. Under the leadership of the Workers' Party the business of abolishing feudalism, developing democracy and providing material conditions for laying the foundations of socialism was tackled. A land reform was carried out, industry was nationalised, with the result that the public sector was dominant in the economy and socialist relations of production were established.

In August 1945 there was a national people's democratic revolution in Vietnam which abolished the authority of the colonisers and feudal elements and proclaimed the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

The mass revolutionary movement that made the revolution passed through three stages: (a) a bourgeois democratic movement in 1930-1 during which the main slogans were expulsion of the imperialists, overthrow of the feudals, national independence, transfer of the land to those who tilled

¹ See *Materials of the Third Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea* (Politizdat, Moscow, 1957) pp. 13-14 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.* p. 14.

it and the establishing of workers and peasants power (b) the democratic movement of 1936-9 against the colonialists and royal and bureaucratic rule for democratic freedoms improvement of the people's living conditions and defence of peace (c) the national liberation movement under the leadership of the anti-imperialist united national front—the League for Independent Vietnam (Vietminh)—in 1940-5

The August revolution decided the issue of power but carrying out of the revolution's democratic aims was prevented by the French colonial authorities aggressive war. For eight years the Vietnamese people fought a heroic Resistance War which ended in victory in 1954. Important democratic reforms were carried out during the war primarily an agrarian reform aimed at limiting and then abolishing the landlord class and at improving the working people's life. The report of the Central Committee to the Third Congress of the Workers' Party of Vietnam noted that having victoriously finished the Resistance War the party had carried out an agrarian reform in the north of the country eliminated feudal land ownership for ever and fully realised the slogan of 'The Land for Those Who Till It'. The carrying out of the two main tasks of the national people's democratic revolution in North Vietnam was a historic victory of the Vietnamese people which opened the road for the Vietnamese revolution to pass to a new stage.¹ This revolution was realised fully over the whole country after elimination of the reactionary regime in the South which marked the beginning of the transition to building a peaceful independent united socialist Vietnam.

The struggle of the Laotian people had quite a few special features. In October 1945 in a situation of heightening of the national liberation movement strengthened by the Soviet Army's victory over German fascism and Japanese militarism the Laotian people had risen against foreign oppressors taken power into their own hands and proclaimed their independence. But soon the French colonialists returned with the support of the USA and Great Britain and the nation was forced to take the road of organising a long people's resistance. Armed struggle against the French colonialists and then against US imperialism and its hirelings was combined with mobilisation of the masses the creation of political bases and a rear the forming and development of revolutionary political and armed forces. By strengthening its ranks and winning broader and broader masses over to its side (the General Secretary of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party

¹ See *The Third Congress of the Workers' Party of Vietnam* (Pölitizdat Moscow 1961) p. 16 (in Russian)

and Prime Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic Kaysone Phomvihane has written) they were able to build a united national front, a revolutionary army, and a resistance authority, and consolidate the worker-peasant alliance. The revolution gradually embraced the whole country.¹ It was prepared and carried out under the leadership of the People's Revolutionary Party, as a result the monarchy was abolished and the Lao People's Democratic Republic proclaimed in December 1975. The Laotian people took the road of socialist transformations.

As will be seen even from this short description of the revolutionary process in Asian countries, there too the people's and socialist revolutions, for all their special features, developed in accordance with the same general patterns as the revolutions in Russia and the European people's democracies. And there too the radical problems of the revolution were the issue of power, passage of which to the working people and their vanguard parties also marked victory of the revolutionary movement.

Finally, another example, the Cuban revolution, which developed in conditions strikingly different from those of the revolutionary struggle in either Europe or Asia. In Cuba the revolutionary movement took on the character of an insurgent war against a proimperialist dictatorship. An end was completely put to this regime by the Insurgent Army's victory in January 1958, after which a period of actual dual power set in when the capitalist opposition parties, thinking the aims of the movement achieved and the fight finished, tried to stop further development of the revolutionary process. The revolutionary democratic forces, however, led by Fidel Castro, foiled these attempts and, having formed a revolutionary government, carried out radical social and political reforms in 1959-60 that consolidated the working people's power in Cuba.

The Cuban revolution was yet further confirmation of the need for Marxist-Leninist leadership of society in the fight for socialism. During it, for the first time in history, the revolutionary democratic movement passed to the standpoint of scientific socialism. Then all the truly revolutionary forces of the country, including the Communists, united around the leadership of this movement on a Marxist-Leninist platform. Cuba's experience again convincingly demonstrated that consistency in pursuing a revolutionary line by the very logic of the class struggle fosters passage of revolutionary democrats to the standpoint of scientific socialism.

¹ See *The Communist Movement: Problems of Theory and Practice* (Prague, 1978), pp. 98-99 (in Russian).

Here is what Fidel Castro said about it at the First Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba

Many of our compatriots were too young during the insurrectional fight to have either acquired a clear class consciousness then or a level of revolutionary political thinking above that of their own class. It is a gigantic step from all the liberal bourgeois political education that permeated our society to socialism and Marxism-Leninism. Our masses, especially the workers and humble sectors, who constitute the overwhelming majority, covered it rapidly. The Revolution itself and the resolute struggle against imperialism and the exploiter classes taught us all admirably.¹

In short, the experience of the revolutionary transformations in Europe and Asia and in Cuba indicates that the main principles of Marxism-Leninism retain all their force during the transition from capitalism to socialism. As Leonid Brezhnev remarked in the Central Committee's report to the 26th Congress of the CPSU:

all the socialist countries in fact carried out the revolution in their own way, using forms that were dictated by the correlation of class forces in each of these countries, by the national distinctions and the external situation.²

His report confirmed the truth of Lenin's ideas about the relation of the general and the specific in the socialist revolution.

Analysis of the concrete conditions and special features of the fight for socialism is a complicated business of scientific cognition that calls for deep knowledge by Communists of the trends of economic, social and political development in their countries and of the specific features of their history and national traditions, and for allowance for the specific character of the operation of various external factors and many other circumstances. Any scorning of this analysis, refusal to carry out profound constructive research or attempt to limit oneself to blind copying of the experience of other countries not only contradicts the requirements of the revolutionary

¹ *Informe del Comité Central del PCC al Primer Congreso. Presentado por el compañero Fidel Castro Ruz, Primer Secretario del PCC* (Editado por el Departamento de Orientación Revolucionaria del Comité del Partido Comunista de Cuba, La Habana, 1975), pp. 45-46.

² L. I. Brezhnev, *Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU to the XXVI Congress*, p. 23.

method but also fails to take into account the conditions of objective reality itself which is always concrete

At the same time as Marxist Leninists stress ignoring or underestimation of the general patterns and absolutising of national and other features also contradicts the cause of the revolution Leninism teaches and practice confirms that a proper combination of the general and the particular in the activities of revolutionary workers parties is a *sine qua non* of their successful fulfilment of a vanguard role in the socialist revolution

Conclusions

The revolutionary practice of our times very convincingly demonstrates the truth and viability of Lenin's theory of the socialist revolution and the immense significance of the October Socialist Revolution of 1917 for the world revolutionary process. In spite of the great differences in the conditions in which separate countries are developing and the substantial change in the international factors the main patterns of the socialist revolution remain unaltered. They operated in 1917 in Russia just as distinctly as decades later in many other countries. It is these main patterns and not the national details that determine the content of the revolution in each country. The experience of revolution shows that they can occur in the most varied conditions and forms but the fight for socialism always regularly crowns the fight for national liberation and democracy. And that is the starting point of Marxist Leninist parties. Relying on the experience of the October Revolution in Russia and other revolutions and constructively applying revolutionary theory to concrete conditions they are confidently leading their nations to victory of the socialist revolution.

PROBLEMS OF BUILDING SOCIALISM

Socialism as the first phase of the communist formation is an intricate system of socio-economic relations moulded by historical development. To understand its substance and essence in its modern form it is necessary not only to look into the phenomena and relations characteristic of it now but also to trace how they arose and were consolidated. Reference to the history of the forming of socialism helps us as well to determine and clarify the content of certain categories of history and equally of other social sciences that facilitate the working out of problems of the period of transition to socialism.

Since the objective conditions of the transition to socialism (forms of social production, class structure, social contradictions) are mainly the same in all countries, common patterns for shaping the socialist mode of production are typical of each of them. The special features that stem from the concrete historical, political, social and cultural conditions of the building of socialism in separate countries are manifested within the context of the general patterns. Strict observance of these patterns and regularities and allowance for the special features are a necessary condition of success in building socialism.

Let us touch on some pressing problems of the building of socialism that have a direct bearing on our theme of the transition from capitalism to socialism and are the object of a particularly active ideological struggle.

1 The Inevitability and Essence of a Transition Period

The experience gathered in the course of building socialism indicates that a transition period is historically inevitable, however much the enemies of Leninism try to affirm the opposite. Marxist-Leninist theory constantly fights those who

distort the substance of the transition period and to do so relies on the fundamental theoretical tenets of a transition period from capitalism to socialism already formulated by Marx and Engels

When defining the patterns of the transition period Marx and Engels started from the assumption that the socialist revolution would triumph relatively simultaneously in all the major countries of the world. They therefore spoke of the transition period as a more or less simultaneous one, the same for all nations as the concluding stage of the world socialist revolution. They considered that the victorious revolution would in that case set up a single world dictatorship of the proletariat, a world republic uniting all socialist countries.

In a new historical period Lenin, basing himself on their ideas, suggested that the transition period would be a stage of passing from capitalism to socialism after victory of the revolution in one or more countries. Contemporary experience fully confirms that proposition. The transition to socialism constitutes a world historic epoch embracing various types of country—from ones with capitalist or even pre-capitalist relations to ones at various stages of the development of socialism.

Every new socio-economic formation is consolidated over a more or less lengthy transitional period during which relations, features and attributes of the old formation are eliminated and new forms of social system established. That applies fully to socialism as well.

A transition period to socialism is also necessitated by the fact that many of its preconditions cannot arise even in the conditions of the most developed capitalist society but can only take shape during the passage from capitalism to socialism, namely radical changes in property forms and relations between classes and nations, elimination of the system of exploitation and so on. It is therefore impossible to drive to socialism in the coach of the past, as right wing opportunists think, with the conditions for it (economic, political and ideological) fully prepared within the womb of capitalism.

Lenin never limited socialism just to a single act of socialising of production irrespective of the concrete material and technical circumstances, as leftist elements try to preach. For him socialism was always a system of social relations based on passage of the means of production into the possession of society, the organisation of production along a general plan in the interests of all members of society and provision of prosperity and free all round development for them.

New patterns of social development arise in the transition

period The destinies of the revolution the prospects of mankind's development depend on a correct understanding and utilisation of these patterns on the content and forms of the economic political and other activity of society

What should be emphasised first and foremost is the acute struggle between the social forces which is characteristic of the transition period Capitalism for instance was consolidated in the bourgeoisie's acute struggle against feudal elements during which its main task was to scrap the feudal social relations that were fettering development of already existing capitalist social relations A transition period from capitalism to socialism is also objectively necessary in order to break down outlived capitalist social relations and suppress the capitalist class's resistance As Lenin wrote in 1916

And from a scientific point of view it would be utterly wrong—and utterly unrevolutionary—for us to evade or gloss over the most important thing crushing the resistance of the bourgeoisie—the most difficult task and one demanding the greatest amount of fighting in the *transition* to socialism¹

Another task of the transition period and a principal and determining one is constructive activity to build socialist social relations As soon as the people take power the content of the transition period is radically altered As Lenin wrote

To defeat capitalism in general it is necessary in the first place to defeat the exploiters and to uphold the power of the exploited namely to accomplish the task of overthrowing the exploiters by revolutionary forces in the second place to accomplish the constructive task that of establishing new economic relations of setting an example of how this should be done These two aspects of the task of accomplishing a socialist revolution are indissolubly connected and distinguish our revolution from all previous ones which never went beyond the destructive aspect²

While deciding the issue of transfer of state power to the workers the socialist revolution does not yet thereby

¹ V I Lenin The Military Programme of the Proletarian Revolution *Collected Works* Vol 23 p 79

² V I Lenin Our Foreign and Domestic Position and the Tasks of the Party *Collected Works* Vol 31 p 417 You stubbornly refuse to see he said to old specialists who saw the dictatorship of the proletariat solely as an iron hand that the iron hand that destroys also creates (V I Lenin Speech on the Nationalisation of the Banks Delivered at a Meeting of the All Russia Central Executive Committee December 14 (27) 1917 *Collected Works*, Vol 26 p 389)

substitute socialism for capitalism. As we know, Soviet Russia was called a socialist republic from the outset, but this title signified (as Lenin stressed)

the determination of Soviet power to achieve the transition to socialism and not that the new economic system is recognised as a socialist order.¹

The socialist transformation of the economy after establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat requires a more or less long time, i.e. a whole transition period. By Lenin's definition, this period also signifies that there are elements, particles, fragments of *both* capitalism and socialism.² The contradiction between rising socialism and dying capitalism is the main contradiction of the economy of the transition period, a contradiction that is resolved by complete elimination of capitalism and the conversion of socialism into a universal, mature form of social production.

Finally, Lenin considered political education of the people an exceptionally important task of the transitional period. The Party of Communists, he stressed, on assuming leadership of the state of the dictatorship of the proletariat, must educate the masses, bring them to an understanding of the need for a socialist organisation of society and transformation of the economy and culture. We must preach socialism, he said.³

He also defined the function of the dictatorship of the proletariat in relation to the problems of the transition period. The proletariat, he pointed out, must overthrow the capitalist class and deprive it of state power, so as to use this weapon to its own ends. These ends were crushing of the capitalists' resistance, neutralisation of the peasantry and as far as possible winning of the peasants (or at least the majority of the labouring, non-exploiter peasants) over to the side of the proletariat, organisation of large scale machine industry in the factories and means of production expropriated from the capitalists, i.e. the organisation of socialism on the ruins of capitalism.⁴

The concrete historical content and forms of the transition period are naturally different for each country and are governed by the substance of the revolutionary process itself, by how far the masses of the people are involved in the business of building socialism, by the strength and ideological

¹ V I Lenin, *Left Wing Childishness and the Petty Bourgeois Mentality*, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 335.

² *Ibid.*

³ V I Lenin, *The Seventh (April) All Russia Conference of the R S D L P (B)*, April 24-29 (May 7-12), 1917, *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, p. 242.

⁴ See V I Lenin, *The Constituent Assembly Elections and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 263.

equipment of the vanguard revolutionary party they also depend on the level of development of the productive forces and the special features of the world situation. For each country the length of the transition period depends on the aggregate of these circumstances and conditions. When the USSR was following the road of socialist construction alone and was being pressured by capitalist encirclement the point about the length of the transition period was posed differently from now when each country building socialism is guaranteed the aid of the countries of the socialist community when the balance of power in the world is steadily swinging against imperialism and when the ideas of socialism have captured the minds of very broad masses in all countries.

The length of the transition period naturally differs for industrially developed countries and economically backward ones. In principle the higher a country's level of development and the more the preconditions of socialism have matured the less time it needs to carry out the whole series of special national transitional measures.

In the Soviet Union the foundations of socialism had been laid by the mid 1930s i.e. over roughly twenty years. In the countries of Central and South Eastern Europe where the conditions for building of socialism were more favourable with support from the USSR the transition period was shorter and was completed in the main at the end of the 1950s and in the early 1960s.

The Marxist Leninist theory of a transition period between capitalism and socialism has been attacked from two sides. The reformist interpretation denies the need for radical changes in all spheres of the affairs of a society in which the proletariat has gained power. It looks on the transition period as a gradual transformation of capitalism into socialism retaining all the main attributes of capitalism i.e. private ownership of the means of production, political pluralism (with the working class and its party assigned the role solely of equal partner of the other social forces) and finally coexistence of socialist and capitalist ideologies.

The other distortion of the theory is the idea put forward by left extremists that it is impossible to build socialism or communism even in countries where there has been a revolution while there are countries in the world that have not thrown off the chains of capitalism. This conclusion contradicts the objective historical patterns and demonstrates incomprehension of the essence of the transition from capitalism to socialism and communism. It reflects a striving to hold back the development of other countries artificially and to slow down the inexorable course of history itself. Objectively it is a reactionary position because it constrains

the revolutionary energy and initiative of the popular masses of capitalist and dependent countries. It is a position of historical pessimism since its perspective is not struggle for socialism but only struggle for the transition period.

This idea reflects a dogmatic attempt to apply the theory of the simultaneous victory of the revolution to an epoch and historical conditions in which there are no objective preconditions for implementing it. The theory and practice of extremists strike at the interests of the working masses and revolutionary forces of the world.

Of all the issues of the transition period that give rise to particularly acute ideological struggle the problem of the dictatorship of the proletariat is undoubtedly a primary one which is not fortuitous. The dictatorship of the proletariat is the main instrument for tackling all the tasks of the transition period. Without it it would be impossible in general to build socialism. As Lenin wrote

World history is leading unswervingly towards the dictatorship of the proletariat but is doing so by paths that are anything but smooth simple and straight¹

As soon as Marxism put forward the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat capitalist ideologists began immediately to attack it. And it is on this issue that the capitalist class particularly clearly reveals its class positions and interests.

The idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat is criticised most vigorously on two points. First of all an attempt is made to refute the thesis of the leading role of the working class. Given the scientific and technological revolution it is said the role of the proletariat in society's affairs has altered it is not now the sole consistently revolutionary class so that it is impossible to pose the question of its political power. It is also said that leadership of all social processes by a certain elite of technocrats is becoming more and more important in present conditions and that classes and class struggle and leadership of society from class positions are losing their significance.

Realisation of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the transition period is linked with the fact that the proletariat is the leading class as concerns production and social affairs.

Lenin pointed out the need to consolidate the working class's leading role. Without its directing activity he said victory of socialism was inconceivable. He developed the Marxist theses about the need to consolidate the alliance of the working class and peasantry indispensably with predomi-

¹ V I Lenin *The Third International and Its Place in History* *Collected Works*, Vol. 29 p. 309

nance of the working class. Only the working class conscious and disciplined was capable of drawing the great majority of the working people after it including the middle classes so as to build a socialist society. The proletariat moreover as practical revolutionary work indicated did not need just any old social alliance with the non proletarian strata but needed one that would guarantee its leading role that would be aimed at consolidating the working class's positions in the fight against the capitalist class and for a socialist transformation of society.

The other trick employed by the enemies of Marxism Leninism is to counterpose the dictatorship of the proletariat to the essence of democracy and to assert that the former means the end of any democracy.

The dictatorship of the proletariat like the dictatorship of any class has a class character. Ask yourself wasn't there a dictatorship of the landowning classes under feudalism? And of the class of capitalists under capitalism? Such a dictatorship is a fact for both. Its purpose is to protect the class interests of the dominant forces. Which nobody can deny. Therefore cannot the proletariat have a dictatorship or leading position in society and limit the freedom of action of those who oppose the workers' power and socialism?

All talk of independence or democracy in general (Lenin said at the Second All Russia Trade Union Congress in January 1919) no matter what sauce it may be served up with is a sheer fraud and a downright betrayal of socialism.¹

It is wrong incidentally (both in theory and practice) to make a mechanical non-class comparison as some do who speak in the name of the proletariat between capitalist and socialist democracy. The latter is not formal democracy but is essentially democracy for the workers, peasants and intellectuals. Its substance consists in involving the millions of the masses in the country's administration, economic matters and all public affairs. Capitalist democracy even though in some countries as a result of the struggle of the working class it gives the workers certain albeit curtailed rights is democracy in essence for the chosen few for those who enjoy economic power. The freedom of speech, freedom of assembly and other rights proclaimed by the capitalist class are purely formal (although even these rights are being constantly curtailed) because they are exercised in accordance with rules of the game that protect the power of capital and divert dangers from the holy of holies of

¹ V. I. Lenin, Report at the Second All Russia Trade Union Congress, January 20, 1919, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 417.

capitalism the principle of private property The thousands of volumes written by capitalist propagandists about the blessings of their democracy in no way alter the fact that the working people who constitute the overwhelming majority of the population of capitalist countries are kept out of leadership of society's affairs and are deprived of the most vital rights viz the right to work and the right to manage the means of production And without them democracy is sounding brass or tinkling cymbal

That is why Lenin quite justly declared that proletarian socialist democracy is a million times more democratic than any bourgeois democracy And this we see from the flourishing of socialist democracy in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries

Yet still another trick employed by enemies of Marxism Leninism attacking the dictatorship of the proletariat is to counterpose party to class The apologists of pure democracy slyly endeavour to substitute muzzy theses about the free play of political forces for Lenin's theses about the transition period and deny a leading role in the building of socialism to the Communist Party The ruling party in socialist society they say does not reflect the interests of the proletariat and stands above the working people and there is a gap between its policy and the will of the working class and so on Statements like these have been circulated since the rise of existing socialism and have been convincingly refuted by its whole history The leading role of the party in the affairs of socialist society promotes efficient organisation of the building of socialism a real flourishing of the economy and culture and development of broad democracy as an inalienable precondition of the consolidation of people's power

There are also attempts to revise the theory of the transition period as regards the pace of the transition Here too we meet two extremes One is expressed in a tendency to shorten the period of the transition to socialism without grounds and to skip inevitable stages of development displayed in hasty declarations about the full victory of socialism and elimination of all antagonistic contradictions and about society's having already become united and the socialist state a national all people's one As Fidel Castro said at the First Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba

Revolutions customarily have their utopian periods in which their protagonists dedicated to the noble task of converting their dreams into reality and putting their ideals into practice believe that the historical ends are much closer than they are and that men's will desires and intentions can do everything surmounting objective

facts. But it is also the revolutionary's duty to be a realist, to adjust his action to historical and social laws and to drink from the inexhaustible spring of political science and universal experience the knowledge that is indispensable for guiding the revolutionary processes. He likewise has to know how to learn from facts and realities.¹

Another trend consists in trying to drag the transition period out endlessly. But this understanding of it (which is propagated by various kinds of anti-communist ideologists) has nothing in common with the Marxist Leninist theory of socialist revolution or with the concrete historical practice of the transition period. It is an expression of petty bourgeois bewilderment and fear in face of this period's difficulties and the complexities of building socialism and is an endeavour to divert the masses from revolutionary struggle to persuade them that capitalism is an eternal system and that their job is to improve it.

The various deviations from the Marxist Leninist theory of the transition period harm the building of socialism and complicate the work of Communist Parties in guiding the development of society. History has shown that only when Communists consistently and constructively carry out this theory, allowing for the conditions in their countries, do they make maximum advances.

2 The Theory of the Building of Socialism

The founding of the first socialist society in history is inseparable from the name of Lenin. His theoretical and practical work found expression in the plan he worked out for the building of socialism, which became internationally important because he did not simply start from the specific conditions of Russia but took into account the general trends of socio-economic and political development in the world.

Lenin's plan of socialist construction has inevitably been the focus of public attention for many decades. Why has that been?

(1) More and more new countries and new nations, and the ever broadening socio-political movement, declare their goal to be the building of a socialist society. Practical interest in this theory is growing both among political scientists and practical politicians and among the broadest popular masses insofar as they link their future with the idea of socialism.

¹ *Informe del Comité Central del PCC al Primer Congreso* p. 103

(2) Apart from the growing interest in Leninism the variety and dissimilarity of the conditions of social development in various countries and their difference from what they were in Russia at the beginning of the new socialist era have generated greater or less doubts among some supporters of socialism about the possibilities or limits of applying Lenin's ideas in certain actual conditions and of employing in practice Lenin's plan so successfully carried out in Russia. At the same time however we have seen that use of Lenin's conclusions has yielded remarkable results while ignoring or rejecting of their practical significance has led to mistakes and difficulties in the building of socialism.

(3) The ideological opponents of Marxism-Leninism precisely because of the mounting interest in socialism are toiling actively away as never before to discredit Lenin's theory of socialist construction. And here we find certain new accents. Whereas they used to concentrate attention on Stalinism their fire has been directed in recent years at Lenin and Leninism. They no longer talk about the distortions of the Stalin period but about all the shortcomings that there have been or are in Soviet society which they lay and laid at the door of its very source Leninism and even allege some that have never existed at all but which they themselves have ascribed to it. Another feature is that the critique of Lenin's theory of the building of socialism is given a scientific looking form in contrast to the past when it used to be simply indiscriminately torn to shreds. Ideologists don the masks of researchers deck their lies and inventions with historical facts (which they distort and twist) and figments of their imagination (which they fob off as facts).

All this taken together impels us on the one hand to dwell on certain of the most typical deliberately spread distortions or mistaken interpretations of Lenin's theory and on the problem of its applicability in present-day conditions and on the other hand to set out some of its most topical theses as we said above more or less systematically.

First of all there is a false premise of denying the universal significance of Lenin's ideas and his plan for building socialism. Certain anti-communist writers of both a right wing and an ultra left persuasion try to sell the absolutely false idea in their books that Lenin was simply incapable of working out the theoretical and practical principles of the building of socialism since he directed matters for a very short period died early and in fact did not see socialism. The ridiculousness of this argument is already obvious from the fact that there is no conceivable way scientifically to define what period is sufficient in this sense and what one is not. Lenin guided the building of the new society for more than

six years—and what years the very first in the history of the socialist state the initial and decisive ones. What he wrote in that period thinking intensely about each step on the road to socialism constitutes ten volumes of his works. Is that much or little? The very posing of the question is false because it is not the formal quantitative characteristics that are mainly important (although they are evidence of the immense labour Lenin performed) but the meatiness and theoretical depth of his analysis of the possibilities themselves and later of the first steps in building socialism and its prospects.

Furthermore I would like to draw attention to a serious methodological mistake associated with applying Lenin's theory which is that when people speak of the patterns of socialism they do not always draw a distinct difference between those that operate during the revolution and those that operate during the building of socialism itself. This leads in particular to forms of struggle employed during the fight for power being extended into the period of the building of socialism. It is therefore important to distinguish carefully between patterns that ceased to operate with establishment of workers' power and those that manifest themselves only after completion of the revolution and patterns that cover the period both of the proletariat's winning of power and of building the new society.

Lenin's plan including industrialisation, collectivisation and the cultural revolution is sometimes treated too narrowly in the literature in isolation from the whole set of issues of the building of socialism embracing the economic, political, ideological and international spheres. Reduction of this plan to certain concrete propositions can and does lead to an incorrect interpretation of the tasks of the building of socialism in different countries.

The point that Lenin's plan was limited to the context of the socialist stage also cannot be recognised as correct. Lenin also defined the main roads of development of society after solution of the tasks of socialist transformation in the stage of the building of communism which means that his plan must be treated with due account of the prospects for socialism's further development.

Finally the thesis that Lenin worked on the problems of the building of the new society only after the October Revolution is also mistaken. He treated them in many works written before the seizure of power, especially in those written on the eve of October 1917.¹ He considered the

¹ See *The Tasks of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution*, *Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power*, *The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It*, *The State and Revolution*, and others.

coming to power of the working class to be a component of the socialist transformations and worked on its problems as part of the whole set of issues of the building of socialism. The drawing of a line between Lenin's pre October and post October writings is objectively aimed at representing the plan for the building of socialism as the product simply of the concrete post revolutionary situation unconnected with the general trends of revolutionary development and lacking any deep theoretical substantiation.

It is another matter that the practice of building socialism actually connected with concrete conditions introduced corrections and amendments to the plans. These corrections however related to inessential aspects of the programme of radical transformations mainly to the pace of their implementation and were linked with issues of whether or not a given concrete society was ready for the implementing of certain concrete measures. Some reforms that seemed theoretically possible in the immediate future had not yet been prepared for by social development which is not surprising since no one after all could say in advance with full certainty how far economic relations must be matured for a revolution to take place and no one could foresee in detail the whole complexity of such a grandiose social transformation or weigh up in advance what could be done immediately and what not. Finally no one knew how the international situation would shape up. The perfecting of the theory of building socialism during this process its checking and enriching by practical experience and the ability of its creators to reject separate partial proposals when they were not confirmed by experience while rigorously following the main determining well verified principles are evidence simply of its strength and the maturity and theoretically justified boldness of its creators.

Now let us turn to the substance of Lenin's plan i.e. to the patterns of the building of socialism. We shall consider four aspects of them viz the economic political ideological and international.

In the field of economics Lenin started from the points that private ownership of the means of production would be abolished in the transition period that control of the economy would pass to society which would organise planned economic development in its own interests and that the economy's structure and capacity would begin to be altered so that socialist reproduction would be ensured on their basis and the material blessings distributed in society in accordance with the interests of its development as a whole and remuneration of workers in production according to their work. The volume of these tasks was linked with the scale of

the economy and the maturity of the material and technical preconditions of socialism

The transitional character of the relations of production during the building of socialism was not simply that the economy would be a mixed one for a certain time (different for each country because of its historical economic and other features) but also that business within the public sector would retain remnants of historically preceding economic relations. The contradictions caused by the unevenness of the development of social production made themselves clearly felt during the socialist transformation of agriculture. Only through the support of the proletarian state above all in the realm of the technical equipping of farming and the implementing of other important measures were these contradictions gradually overcome.

Lenin considered industrialisation the only way (a) to re-equip all sectors of the economy in accordance with the advances of scientific and technical progress and (b) to achieve rapid growth of the productive forces and a steady raising of the material and cultural prosperity of the whole of society. He worked on the problem of the material and technical basis of socialism and communism and put forward key tasks: electrification, the introduction of machinery in industry and the development of engineering and science etc. He thus approached the problems of development of the economy from a political standpoint as well as an economic one. These issues would be tackled differently in different countries of course, allowing for specific national features, economic opportunities and so on, but the heart of the matter of building the material and technical basis remains unaltered and the same as it was in Lenin's plan.

Lenin considered collectivisation of agriculture the second task of economic construction of socialist society, i.e. transfer of individual, isolated small peasant farms onto the rails of large scale social socialist agriculture. He worked on the principles, forms and methods of co-operation, the principles of large scale social farming, the ways and methods of socialist re-education and training of the peasantry and elimination of the contradiction between town and country. He showed that socialism has to be built and developed on the basis of farming that took account of the advances of modern science and engineering. In short, you will find answers to the peasant question as a whole in Lenin's works as it stood both during the building of socialism and subsequently during advance to the building of communist society.

There is a baseless view that Lenin's collectivisation plan was applicable only and exceptionally in Russian conditions.

In actual fact his plan contained such generally significant principles of socialist farming as peasant co operation elimination of the distinctions between town and country and so on Realisation of these principles depends of course on the actual conditions in a country Lenin pointed out for instance that a whole series of special transitional measures would have to be carried out in countries with small scale peasant farming to draw the peasantry into the building of socialism but would not be needed where capitalism was developed and where wage workers were the immense majority in both industry and agriculture

When speaking about Lenin's plan we have to remember that he considered a main condition of building the new society to be implementation of the principle of distribution by the quantity and quality of work and of material self interest combined with moral incentives He often said it was impossible to build socialism simply on enthusiasm even though that enthusiasm was engendered by the great aim of carrying out the socialist revolution In addition to the personal self interest of working people in the results of their labour he stressed it was also necessary to take moral stimulation into account

Lenin's plan of reforms in the political sphere covered a broad range of issues connected with building the political superstructure of socialist society Among them we must name the shaping of society's political structure determination of the aims functions organisation and methods of working of governmental and party institutions and of various social organisations (trade unions youth organisations artistic bodies sports organisations etc) forms of expression of national interests in a multinational state determination of the place of institutions that are retained under socialism by force of circumstances above all the church In the actual conditions of separate countries individual institutions of the old system can needless to say be employed in the new political system but a quite new structure arises on the whole whose job it is to ensure the functioning of socialist democracy and guarantee the standards of the new society by means of political and organisational measures

Lenin considered that successful building of socialism and communism called for further organisational and ideological consolidation of the party raising of the standard of all inner party work and growth of the party's role as the leading force in building the new society He therefore attached special significance to matters of the all round development of inner party democracy raising of Communists ideological and political standard improvement of the qualitative com-

position of the party and the functioning of its leading bodies

Lenin taught that Communist Parties were the advanced organised vanguard and leader of the working class and all working people. Without their leadership the masses could not fight successfully either to consolidate their power or for socialist reforms. There can also be several parties under socialism but only one exercises the leading role namely the Marxist Leninist party which guides the whole development of socialist society.

The organisation itself of the administration of socialist society he pointed out and the structure of the state machinery must correspond to the tackling of the economic and political tasks of building socialism and communism.

It is to Lenin too that we owe determination of the ways of dealing with the national question during the building of socialism. He attached exceptional importance to this matter and developed it during all his revolutionary activity.

Lenin's theory was based on his thesis which he thoroughly substantiated of recognition of the right of self-determination for every nationality. From that followed his posing of the forms of relations between nations after victory of socialism and of the state structure of a multinational country like Russia. In the Declaration of Rights of the Peoples of Russia published on 3(16) November 1917 the Soviet Government had already declared that the following principles of the programme of the Bolshevik Party underlay its national policy: recognition of the right of nations to self-determination including the right to secede and form an independent state; recognition of the equality and sovereignty of the peoples of Russia; abolition of all national privileges and limitations; free development of the national minorities and ethnic groups inhabiting the country.

Lenin's line on the national question envisaged a close alliance of fraternal Soviet republics and a resolute fight against great power jingoism and local nationalism. He resolutely opposed any limitation of the right of nations to decide their fate themselves.

Lenin also pointed out the immense role of trade unions for drawing the masses of the workers into the building of socialism. In his fight against various distortions of the role and place of unions under socialism he motivated their tasks as the organisation of education and training, a school of management and a school of communism.¹ He thus saw trade

¹ See V I Lenin *The Trade Unions, the Present Situation and Trotsky's Mistakes* *Collected Works* Vol 32 p 20

unions not just as an element of socialist society but also associated the communist future with them

Lenin resolutely opposed both Trotsky's ideas on converting trade unions into a simple appendage of the state machinery and anarcho syndicalist demands to transfer guidance of the country's economy to them (which would have led to anarchy in production and undermining of the party's leading role). He sharply criticised those who tried under the guise of founding free trade unions to transplant features of the trade union movement typical of capitalism to the soil of socialism.

The organisation of the new society also provided for active involvement of young people in the building of socialism. Work with young people was made an important part of all the party's activity and was directed moreover to moulding the man and social relations of the future communist society.

Lenin also considered the field of ideology an important sector of the building of socialism and communism.

After abolition of the power of the bourgeoisie its ideology still affects many groups of working people for a long time owing to conservation of its direct bearers—remnants of the bourgeois class—the effect of the ideology of capitalist countries and the relative independence of the ideology itself which reflects the economic basis indirectly. All that called for vigorous purposive activity by the Communist Party to re educate the masses ideologically on the basis of Marxism-Leninism which expresses the vital interests of the working class and all working people. As Lenin stressed

We can only build communism out of the material created by capitalism out of that refined apparatus which has been moulded under bourgeois conditions and which—as far as concerns the human material in the apparatus—is therefore inevitably imbued with the bourgeois mentality¹

The cultural revolution had a central place in the party's activity in the transition period. Lenin considered it a kind of dual process. One aspect was to do the maximum possible under socialism so as to make all the treasures of world science and art (including those created by socialism itself) the property of the broad masses of the people. The second aspect was the need to get such a development of science, engineering, art and culture that socialism would be the highest attainment of civilisation. During the cultural revolution in the USSR illiteracy was eliminated and cultural

¹ V I Lenin. *A Little Picture in Illustration of Big Problems*. *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 388.

backwardness (the heritage of exploiter society) overcome the school was converted into an instrument of socialist re-education and a new socialist culture and a socialist intelligentsia were created ¹

Lenin paid great attention to the creation of an educated skilled administrative apparatus in which connection he resolutely opposed red tape and bureaucracy worked on problems of control and the combining of party and government work

The main principles of public administrative work that guided Lenin were party mindedness and fidelity to the interests of the working class and policy of the party a profoundly scientific outlook roots among the people and links with the broad masses of the workers ability to concentrate forces to tackle the central tasks and to determine the main link of activity practicality and methodicalness irreconcilability towards any display of bureaucracy and red tape strict control over the activity of governmental agencies by the party and the masses

A scientific approach to leadership of the state was clearly displayed in Lenin's own activity in him the scholar and the politician were inseparable His plans were deeply grounded in science and theory He strove for broad links between scientific institutions and the state machinery and to draw the best brains of the scientific world into public affairs It was his scientific approach that helped him determine the main trends of development of Soviet society faultlessly plan urgent current and long term tasks correctly and ensure prompt fulfilment of plans

While not denying the need to use suppressive methods to implement state functions Lenin stressed the importance of methods of state administration for dealing with the tasks of the transition period We achieved victory by methods of suppression he wrote in 1918 we shall be able to achieve victory also by methods of administration ² Practicality and methodicalness responsibility and strict discipline underlay these methods Lenin urged

Govern without the slightest hesitation govern with a firmer hand than the capitalist governed before you If

¹ The cultural revolution in the USSR had certain special features In particular universal elementary education was introduced during it immense work was done to eliminate adult illiteracy mass pre school training was introduced teaching staff was trained and the quality of the schools work curricula and syllabuses improved and so on As a result the people's cultural standards were rapidly raised demonstrating the immense superiority of socialism

² V I Lenin The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government *Collected Works*, Vol 27 p 247

you do not you will not vanquish him You must remember that government must be much stricter and much firmer than it was before Whoever now departs from order and discipline is permitting the enemy to penetrate our midst¹

In Lenin the demand for public state discipline was inseparable from intolerance of red tape and bureaucratic delay The best means of fighting bureaucracy he considered was to check performance and the choice of personnel

Check up on their work get down to rock bottom school them teach them give them a proper trouncing Study people search for *able* workers This is now the essence²

He considered democratic centralism to be the main principle of administration as it made it possible to combine planned centralised leadership with broad democracy in order to stimulate activity of the masses and attached great importance to combining and exactly delimiting the activity of government party and social bodies

Lenin worked out the question of the international conditions of the building of socialism and communism Considering the building of socialism in each country as part of the world revolution he saw in the foreign policy of socialist countries a means of providing the conditions necessary both for the development of socialism in them and to help the world revolutionary movement

He substantiated the principles of the international relations between socialist countries demonstrated their radical difference from the international law relations between capitalist countries and laid the basis of socialist international law which formalises and consolidates the relations between socialist states

Lenin's conclusions about the main tasks of socialist construction confirmed by the practice of the USSR and other socialist countries have become a valuable asset of the international Communist movement As Leonid Brezhnev has stressed

None of the difficulties arising during the building of socialism in one country or another have been able to or can cancel the general principles underlying socialist development The practice of the socialist countries has

¹ V I Lenin The New Economic Policy and the Tasks of the Political Education Department *Collected Works* Vol 33 pp 70 71

² V I Lenin To A D Tsyurupa *Collected Works*, Vol 35 p 538

reaffirmed the significance of the ideas of Marx and Lenin that the development of socialist society proceeds on the basis of general laws that in one form or another the dictatorship of the proletariat i.e. state leadership of the building of socialism by the working class is inevitable during the entire period of transition from capitalism to socialism¹

3 Features of the Building of Socialism in Different Countries

The Communist movement has accumulated exceptionally valuable experience of the building of socialist and communist society in many countries

Let us consider features of the implementing of Lenin's plan of building socialist society in the USSR

The Party of Bolsheviks on coming to power carried out immense work to consolidate the gains of the revolution and lay the foundations of socialism. This work proceeded in exceptionally difficult conditions which Lenin referred to in many works especially *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky* and *Economics and Politics in the Era of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat*. What were those conditions?

Russia was the first country in which the chain of imperialism had been broken in which Marxist theoretical propositions about socialism were embodied in concrete practical matters. The Soviet people had to follow uncharted paths and lay the road to a society that was known only in its general features in theory.

This gigantic work had to be carried out in a technically and economically backward country in which the majority of the population were peasants and urban lower middle class in which there was a shortage of skilled personnel and the enormous mass of the people were illiterate. Lenin remarked that czarist Russia was a prodigiously backward state four times worse off than Britain five times worse-off than Germany and ten times worse-off than America in terms of modern instruments of production² and party people did not have the appropriate training.

We know about socialism (wrote Lenin) but knowledge of organisation on a scale of millions knowledge of the

¹ L. I. Brezhnev *Following Lenin's Course* (Progress Publishers Moscow 1972) p. 167

² See V. I. Lenin *How Can Per Capita Consumption in Russia Be Increased?* *Collected Works*, Vol. 19 p. 292

organisation and distribution of goods etc —this we do not have The old Bolshevik leaders did not teach us this The Bolshevik Party cannot boast of this in its history We have not done a course on this yet¹

World War I the Civil War and foreign military intervention threw the country's economy even further back

Soon after the October Revolution the imperialists of the whole world began a war together with the capitalists of Russia against the young Soviet state and after the Civil War continued to prepare new crusades against the USSR knocking together anti Soviet blocs of various sorts Many capitalist countries did not want to recognise the Soviet Union

International reaction's scheming and intrigues were all the more dangerous because a bitter class struggle went on within the country for a long time to decide who would win The Russian capitalist class did not want to accept loss of its dominant position did not believe in the solidity of the Soviet system and fought violently to get back the privileges it had been deprived of and to restore capitalism This all put a deep impress on the forms and methods of the labouring masses' fight for a socialist restructuring of society

In the realm of politics this was expressed in the working class's having to resort to a number of extreme measures against the bourgeoisie it was deprived of the franchise by the Soviet laws and all its attempts to carry on active political struggle were rigorously suppressed The class struggle took such acute forms moreover as a civil war that lasted more than three years The civil war and economic disruption forced the Soviet government to pursue a policy that came to be called war communism The state took over not only large and medium sized industry but also a considerable part of small scale petty industry food rationing was introduced under which the peasants' surpluses were confiscated private trade in the main farm products was banned all citizens had to do compulsory labour service and so on

All these special measures and others in the realm of politics were due to the actual conditions prevailing in the country Lenin did not consider war communism the depriving of the exploiters of the franchise and so on as obligatory for the transition period from capitalism to socialism in other countries The Bolsheviks he stressed again and again had had to do this the class enemy had forced them to it by putting up a violent bitter resistance to

¹ V I Lenin Session of the All Russia C E C April 29 1918 *Collected Works* Vol 27 pp 296-97

the Soviet government's measures. He emphasised among other things that

the question of depriving the exploiters of the franchise is a *purely Russian* question and not a question of the dictatorship of the proletariat in general¹

A number of resolute measures were also taken by the Soviet government against the exploiter classes in the realm of the economy. Immediately after the October Revolution the working class and peasantry took all means of production and other wealth away from the landowners and big capitalists without compensation. The land, big factories, railways, banks, means of communication, the merchant marine and big river steamship companies were nationalised and a monopoly of foreign trade was imposed. Lenin did not consider this attack on capital, however, to be necessary in all circumstances and held that the working class had other means of fighting capitalism. In addition to forcible forms of fighting capitalists it was advisable, as Lenin said, to

use the *method of compromise* or of buying off the cultured capitalists who agree to state capitalism, who are capable of putting it into practice and who are useful to the proletariat as intelligent and experienced organisers of the *largest* types of enterprises²

Lenin suggested granting concessions to foreign capitalists and the founding of enterprises of a state-capitalist type. He did not consider state capitalism a danger for the working class once it held power. State capitalism did not, however, become common in Soviet Russia, that, however, was not the fault of the Bolsheviks but of the bourgeoisie itself, which resisted the new movement and the new development. The working class of Russia therefore had to take the most extreme measures in relation to the exploiter classes in the economic field as well as in politics.

When considering the special features of the building of socialism in the USSR we must touch specially on the methods of eliminating the kulaks as a class. Our enemies have written reams to prove that the kulaks were physically exterminated in the Soviet Union. Such statements are lies. The kulaks, as a class, were expropriated in the USSR, which was due to the fact that they, nourishing hatred of socialism, refused to sell their surplus grain to the state, resorted to

¹ V. I. Lenin, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 255.

² V. I. Lenin, *Left Wing Childishness and the Petty Bourgeois Mental*, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 345.

terror set fire to collective farm granaries barns and cowsheds and went in for sabotage which forced the party to adopt very firm measures against them including resettling them in other parts of the country and confiscating all their means of production But forcible elimination of the kulak class did not mean its physical extermination The overwhelming majority of the kulaks were given every chance to work

A distinguishing feature of the building of socialism in the USSR was also that it had to be done at an extremely rapid pace without any outside economic aid whatsoever Industrialisation had to be carried out mainly by means of funds withdrawn from agriculture which aggravated the problems of developing farm production and food supply But we had no other course because the issue was as follows either we rapidly built a large scale industry and mechanised farming consolidated the country's political strength and defence capacity and thereby ensured complete victory of socialism or we doomed it to death The issue became particularly acute because the USSR found itself within a hostile capitalist encirclement

Such were some of the special features of the building of socialism in the USSR generated by the concrete historical circumstances in the country the first to take the road of building the new society

During the struggle to build socialism in the USSR the Communist Party of the Soviet Union accumulated very rich experience which is being employed by the fraternal parties of the socialist community The new economic policy (NEP) followed in the USSR can serve as an example The essence of NEP was strengthening of the worker-peasant alliance that was a *sine qua non* of successful building of socialism It was aimed at consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat and the building of socialism in the USSR Concretely it was expressed (a) in replacing the surplus food appropriation system by a food tax that was much lower than the taxation under surplus appropriation (the poorest peasants were exempted from certain forms of it and in exceptional cases from the whole tax) (b) in permitting peasants to trade freely in their surpluses (c) in repealing the ban on private enterprise (d) in permitting concessions and so on

The Communist Party considered that these measures would stimulate peasants initiative and promote a rise in farm production which in turn would have a favourable effect on reviving and developing state industry In introducing NEP the party allowed for the fact that it might lead to a certain revival of capitalism but that this would not present any great danger when the commanding heights were held by the proletarian state

The new economic policy which was introduced in 1921 and completed in the latter half of the 1920s completely justified itself. Its implementation helped consolidate the socialist system. The USSR's experience of operating it is of international significance. Lenin often spoke of that and it has been confirmed by the practice of building socialism in the people's democracies.

The experience of organising co-operation in agriculture in the USSR too is of immense value. In implementing Lenin's co-operative plan the CPSU was able to switch nearly 25 million peasant holdings in a short time and in extremely difficult conditions onto the rails of co-operative production. It was a sweeping revolutionary turn in the farming of the Soviet Union. The principles of co-operation worked out in the USSR such as voluntary membership and a differentiated approach to the various socio-economic groups of the peasantry when forming co-operatives, a multistage system of forms of collective farm (from lower to higher), observance of the principle of the personal material self-interest of the members of a co-operative, guidance of the co-operative movement by the party, state and working class etc. were applied in the people's democracies. This experience is also being studied and constructively employed in socialist oriented countries in countries developing along the road of socialism.

The fraternal parties of socialist countries consider that utilisation of the experience of building socialism in the Soviet Union is helping them to do so in their own countries at less cost and giving them the chance to avoid many mistakes in this new difficult but great cause.

At the same time Communist Parties quite rightly think that use of the USSR's experience does not mean to copy it blindly. Copying would contradict the spirit of Leninism and could do considerable harm in certain conditions. As Leonid Brezhnev remarked in the Central Committee's report to the 26th Congress of the CPSU:

The establishment and consolidation of socialist foundations and the building of socialist society had and still have distinctive features in different countries.

So unless one ignores the actual facts one cannot speak of any uniformity or contrast. Communist parties according to the criterion of recognising or not recognising the ways they choose to reconstruct society¹.

The historical situation in which the building of socialism

¹ L. I. Brezhnev *Report of the CPSU Central Committee to the XXVI Congress*, p. 24

developed in Central and South Eastern Europe made for a certain specific element in the character of the constitutional system forms and methods of building the state in their drive for industrialisation and organisation of co-operatives in agriculture etc Let us dwell briefly on these points

After the socialist revolution people's democracy like the Soviets in the USSR became a form of the dictatorship of the proletariat and as experience has shown is successfully fulfilling this function At the same time people's democracy differs from the Soviets in certain special ways

People's democracy fulfils the function of dictatorship of the proletariat in a number of countries where there are several parties (in Poland Bulgaria and the German Democratic Republic) which have representatives in the government and in leading posts in the local authorities These parties recognise the leading role of the Communist or Workers Party in all social and political affairs

Capitalist and opportunist ideologists attack the Marxist Leninist principle of maintaining a leading role for the Communist Party in socialist society and in running the state While treating this matter in a pluralist spirit they are prepared to admit that the position of Communists as the ruling party in a socialist state is inevitable In that case however they declare there needs to be an opposition and a granting of freedom of action to the forces of dissent The advocates of such views quite forget that all the links of the new society's political system fulfil a role predetermined for them by the objective conditions of socialism above all by the social character of ownership of the means of production In these conditions the existence of opposition political parties lacks a socio-economic basis It is precisely the absence of the objective preconditions that is the main reason why there is no place for a class opposition in the political system of real socialism

Capitalist propagandists who advocate return to pluralism of political parties under socialism (including even the revival of reactionary ones) where for several historical reasons either a one party system has been established or a multi party system with recognition of the leading role of the Communist Party try to justify their claims by alleging that opposition criticism of shortcomings and omissions in the work of the socialist authority's agencies would facilitate their speediest removal and so serve the cause of democracy But what this critical mission of opposition forces would be as historical experience has in fact shown is anti socialist and anti-democratic in both nature and direction Communist Parties have their own methods and means of improving public administration the most important being the instrument

of criticism—criticism as Lenin said that is comradely and direct truthful and conclusive and above petty squabbling

The pluralism the bourgeoisie pushes is a profoundly class concept and in no way rests at the principle of the involvement of several parties in political affairs Just as neither the theory nor the practice of socialism disagrees in that respect with the idea of pluralism or rather multiplicity

In this connection we must stress that the principle of more than one party in a socialist state is not something unforeseen from the standpoint of Marxism Leninism As we know Lenin and the Bolsheviks were not opposed to representatives of other parties taking part in the first Soviet government

We wanted a coalition Soviet government he wrote We did not exclude anyone from the Soviet ¹ We also know that at the end of 1917 and beginning of 1918 the Bolsheviks formed a bloc with the Left Socialist Revolutionaries representatives of whom held leading positions in the government the Council of People's Commissars and on most matters reached unanimous decision But the coalition did not last long which was not the fault of the Bolsheviks The Left Socialist Revolutionaries broke the bloc with Lenin's party incited an armed uprising against the Soviet government and the Bolsheviks and took part in the Civil War on the side of the enemies of socialism

Things developed differently in many European people's democracies Parties that unite certain strata of the peasants working intelligentsia and artisans recognise the leading role of the Marxist parties of the working class and mobilise their members for successful tackling of the tasks of building the new society Co-operation of Communist and other parties is not only possible in such conditions but necessary

The real significance that is given to the concept of pluralism in present-day bourgeois propaganda is the uniting of as broad political forces as possible on a position hostile to real socialism A thesis is propagated that envisages conversion of the Communist Party into an equal element of the political system that would contain opposition parties including right wing Social Democrats The history strategy and tactics Leninist principles of building socialism and the functioning and leadership of the Marxist Leninist party in the whole business of building socialism are defamed The principle of democratic centralism is fiercely attacked so as to undermine the party's authority the principles of proletarian socialist internationalism to which petty bourgeois lower

¹ V I Lenin Conference of Regimental Delegates of the Petrograd Garrison October 29 (November 11) 1917 *Collected Works* Vol 26 p 271

middle-class nationalism is counterposed are defamed in every way

That in fact was the direction of the actions of the anti socialist forces in Czechoslovakia for example at the end of the 1960s their ideas were propagated for many years after by the ideologists of anti communism The activity of the counter revolutionary forces in Poland is also significant Speculating on the difficulties that had arisen in the country they developed a slanderous campaign of criticism of the social and state system and the leading role of the Polish United Workers Party

It is clear why these actions evoked the approval of the class enemy weakening of Communists leading role in socialist society leads to its political and social disorganisation and moreover creates the conditions for restoring the capitalist system

An important feature of the people's democracy system is that the Communist and Workers Parties exercise their leading role in the state not only through bodies of power the trade unions youth organisations co-operatives etc as was and is done in the USSR but also through such an organisation as the National Front which is a form of alliance of the working class peasantry urban petty bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia The National Front in Czechoslovakia Fatherland Front in Bulgaria and other people's fronts make it their main aim to unite the people's energies to build socialism It is not a state organisation but a mass social and political one with a central leadership and appropriate local committees People's fronts have their own programme and are a vehicle of co-operation between the various parties during elections for local and central authorities they nominate candidates

Such are some of the special features of people's democracy distinguishing it from the Soviet system

Let us now examine what the main difference is in the forms and methods of the building of socialism in the European people's democracies and the Soviet Union

- Take socialist industrialisation It has been carried out in these countries in a quite different historical situation from that in the USSR Each people's democracy had the chance to employ the latter's experience of building socialism and to draw on the experience of other countries taking the socialist road The Soviet Union gave them material and technical aid and the people's democracies also helped one another Co-operation of socialist countries in the most rational use of economic resources and production capacity specialisation and co-operation of production and mutual co-ordination of current and long term plans were immensely important for

socialist industrialisation. This co-operation made it possible to use the division of labour rationally for maximum development of each country in accordance with both its natural and economic conditions and national features, and the common interests of international socialism. Thanks to that they were able to build up and develop, first of all, the industries they had the best conditions for (raw materials, the appropriate equipment, industrial experience, manpower, etc.). Mutual aid helped pull the economically less developed ones up to the level of the advanced socialist countries.

The socialist transformation of farming also had certain specific features in the people's democracies. In Soviet Russia all the land had been nationalised in 1917, which was a powerful factor when peasant farms were collectivised; in the people's democracies this had not been made a goal either during or after the revolution because of their special historical circumstances and in part because their peasantries had obtained land relatively long since as private property and were deeply attached to their farms. Allowing for that, and guided by Lenin's pointer, speaking of the attitude to middle peasants, that

in most capitalist countries ... the proletarian state should not at once completely abolish private property,¹

the Communist and Workers' Parties nationalised only part of the land, earmarking it for experimental stations, state farms, and to meet public needs, etc. The overwhelming part of the land confiscated from landlords and big landowners passed into the private ownership of farm labourers and of peasants with little land.

The experience of these people's democracies is that it is a complicated business to build socialism, calling for the maximum efforts of the working class and all the working people, and efficient, flexible leadership by Marxist-Leninist parties. No few difficulties have to be overcome.

As for the fact that there can be shortcomings and mistakes in the transition period, Lenin remarked in his 'Letter to American Workers' that

the corpse of capitalism is decaying and disintegrating in our midst, polluting the air and poisoning our lives, enmeshing that which is new, fresh, young and virile in thousands of threads and bonds of that which is old, moribund and decaying.²

¹ V. I. Lenin. Preliminary Draft Theses on the Agrarian Question. *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p 157.

² V. I. Lenin. *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p 72.

The new world he stressed does not come into being ready made does not spring forth like Minerva from the head of Jupiter ¹

In several people's democracies there were individual blunders and mistakes in dealing with economic matters and directing the state machinery the countries' historical and other features and the people's traditions were not always taken into account which caused dissatisfaction among a certain part of the people which was immediately exploited by class enemies who tried (as the experience of Czechoslovakia and certain other countries has shown) to incite the masses against the people's democratic system

Gustav Husak has noted that a serious mistake in Czechoslovakia especially after February 1948 was that the Communist Party let politically unreliable people and careerists of all kinds penetrate its ranks who having got into the party pursued their own gain Many people with views alien to Marxism-Leninism got into the party And because of illusions about an easy road to socialism ideological and educational work was neglected within the party and outside it ² Underestimation of the whole complexity of building socialism can also lead to certain miscalculations in the work of ruling parties János Kádár for example has pointed out that in earlier periods of Hungarian development there were times when the party wanted to go too fast and ran ahead it was forced to come back to reality and look for correct roads and methods ³ According to him the whole experience of revolutionary struggle and the building of socialism calls (and always will) for a party of Communists to avoid dogmatism sectarianism and pseudo-leftist phrases and to see to it that it does not weaken and still more break its links with the masses as unfortunately happened in those years in Hungary ⁴ The main causes of the difficulties that arose in Poland were the weakening of firm ties between the party and the working class serious mistakes in economic policy and public affairs which aggravated the social situation in the country

The Marxist-Leninist parties of socialist countries are carefully analysing the mistakes made and drawing the necessary conclusions from them consolidating their ranks raising the ideological standards of Communists and develop-

¹ *Ibid* p 74

² Cited from G Husak *Selected Articles and Speeches* (Politizdat Moscow 1973) p 129 (in Russian)

³ Cited from János Kádár *Selected Articles and Speeches (February 1976 to June 1979)* (Politizdat Moscow 1980) p 91 (in Russian)

⁴ *Ibid* p 106

ing their revolutionary activity and links with the masses. Special attention is being paid to concrete measures to strengthen the alliance of the working class and peasantry and to improve management of the economy.

The building of socialism has certain special features in Asian countries and in Cuba owing to the specific nature of the development of their economic, social and political structure as a result of their having for a long time been colonial dependencies of imperialism which obstructed their national and social emancipation and also as a result of the specific character of the socialist revolutions carried out in them. It is also important to allow for the fact that certain measures of a socialist character sometimes began to be implemented during the maturing of the democratic stage of the revolution to the socialist.

Allowing for the unique features of the building of socialism in these countries, let us examine the process separately in each country.

In the Mongolian People's Republic the specific features of the building of the new society were primarily governed by the need to abolish the feudal relations deeply rooted in agriculture and to form socialist co-operatives of the pastoral *arat* households. The forming of co-operatives took several decades and was completed in the main at the end of the 1950s when the pastoralists joined co-operative associations on a mass scale. A characteristic feature of the forming of co-operatives was its implementation without expropriation of the kulak exploiter elements who voluntarily became members of them. Mongolia was also able through the USSR's all-round support to start on industrialisation. It has now been converted from a backward agricultural country into an agrarian industrial one. The level of development reached has enabled it to set big new targets for growth of its economy and culture.

The socialist transformations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea have taken place in a peculiar situation. It is building socialism in circumstances in which the working class and labouring peasantry have won out in one part of the land only while the other part remains under the heel of exploiting classes and international imperialism. In addition the DPRK had to expend much effort after victory of the revolution on repelling the aggression of the South Korean regime and its imperialist patrons in 1950-3. All that undoubtedly stamped the character of the building of socialism.

In the northern part of Korea where power is in the people's hands the revolutionary reforms were carried out in the main in 1946-9. Economic construction went on under the

slogan of priority development of heavy industry with simultaneous development of light industry and agriculture. Summing up the results of the development of industry and the technical reconstruction of the whole national economy the Fifth Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea (in 1970) stated that the DPRK had been converted by the beginning of the 1970s into a socialist industrial state and planned a further consolidation of the socialist system and progress toward full victory of socialism.

In Vietnam the people could only start building the new socialist society on a broad scale in 1954 after the military actions of the French colonialists were ended. The biggest achievement of the first stage of socialist construction was the carrying out of an agrarian reform. From the end of 1953 a line of complete liquidation of landed estates was followed. Around eight million peasants received land from the people's government. Landlords' lands were confiscated on a differential basis. Those in particular who had taken part in the war on the people's side or had not committed crimes against the people were paid compensation on a redemption plan. After the agrarian reform co-operatives began to be formed in the villages. The first form of association was one of temporary or permanent groups for mutual labour help. In 1956 experimental agricultural production co-operatives began to be formed.

During the period of colonial domination there had been almost no national industry in Vietnam. New industrial facilities were built along with the rebuilding, restoration and further development of enterprises confiscated from foreign capitalists. Either co-operatives and semi-co-operatives or mixed enterprises (with public and private capital) were formed in the major part of the private sector. Development of the economy went hand in hand with a change in the social structure of society, an increase in the size of the working class and a strengthening of its role in the country's affairs. In 1969 the dictatorship of the working class was established in the northern part of the country.

The course of the building of socialism was disrupted by the aggressive war of US imperialism. The solid socialist foundation of the republic's economic and political affairs enabled it, with the help of friendly socialist states, to effectively resist the invaders' troops and in May 1975 to win against the imperialist aggressors and liberate South Vietnam, and in the summer of 1976 to unite the southern areas with the North.

In spite of the destruction consequent of the war against US imperialism the people of Vietnam have made

considerable advances on the front of social transformations and building of the national economy. In North Vietnam two forms of socialist property—public and group—have been consolidated everywhere. By 1975 the socialist sector embraced 99.7 per cent of the country's fixed assets and yielded the bulk of the national income in both industry and agriculture.

A socialist sector has also been created in the south of Vietnam and is being consolidated. Co-operatives are being formed in cottage and small scale industry and trade and socio-economic reforms are being carried out in the villages. The Socialist Republic of Vietnam's main efforts are directed at dealing with the urgent problems left by the imperialist war and Chinese aggression and those linked with organising a single economic complex of the North and South, increasing farm production and implementing the decisions of the Fourth Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam on building socialism throughout united Vietnam.

In Laos, as the Fourth Resolution of the Central Committee of the People's Revolutionary Party (February 1977) stated, the aims of the national democratic revolution have in the main been attained and the country is taking the road of building a socialist society, skipping the capitalist stage. In Laos, as the General Secretary of the Party and Prime Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Kaysone Phomvihane has written, a progressive political system had been established to which the backward mode of production did not correspond. The material prerequisites for building socialism were extremely weak and the class enemies and foreign reactionary forces were carrying on continuous disruptive activity against the revolution. The practical work of the party therefore has the following aims: to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat, eliminate the consequences of neocolonialism, heal the wounds inflicted by the war, gradually transform petty production, primarily on fragmented farms, prepare the conditions necessary for large scale socialist production and gradually raise the people's standard of living.¹

The socialist transformation of China has been a very specific process. In the first years of the People's Republic, the bulk of the property owned by foreign imperialists and comprador capitalist class was expropriated and nationalised, which made it possible to create a strong socialist sector in the country's economy. The property of the national bourgeoisie, which on the whole had supported democratic

¹ See *The Communist Movement: Problems of Theory and Practice*, p. 110.

reforms was treated differently. This behaviour of the bourgeoisie cannot of course be explained by a change in its class outlook. Like the capitalist class in every other country it was a defender of private property and the exploitation of others' labour. It had been forced by several circumstances to support people's power and earlier the democratic revolution. It had seen that the overwhelming majority of the people stood firmly for the new system and that it was senseless to resist and fight it. In addition it well remembered the bitter experience of the Russian capitalists' fight against Soviet power.

In the situation prevailing in China capitalist property was not confiscated. This took China's economic backwardness into account and helped deal at that time with the problems of expanding production, accumulating funds and maintaining employment. A policy of utilising, limiting and transforming private industry and commercial enterprises was pursued. This political line was based on two points: (1) to buy out the capitalists' means of production whereby capitalist property would be gradually converted into the property of the whole people through various forms of state capitalism; (2) ideological re-education of the middle class, transforming the capitalists into persons living by their own labour.

Although the implementation of reforms in industry and agriculture was accompanied with serious miscalculations, it made it possible on the whole to establish socialist relations in the various spheres of public affairs.

For all their specific features in different countries socialist reforms are only consistent and successful when they are carried out in the general groove outlined in Lenin's theory and followed in practice by the countries of the socialist community. Take Cuba, for example. The building of the new system began there in contrast to other socialist countries under the leadership of revolutionary democrats who passed during the socialist reforms to a consistent platform of Marxism-Leninism. The merger in 1963 of the leading revolutionary organisations in a United Party of the Socialist Revolution of Cuba (renamed the Communist Party of Cuba in October 1965) was most important in that respect.

The specific features of the Cuban political system also include broad application of forms of direct democracy (mass meetings and gatherings) linked with the activity of committees for defence of the revolution whose role is to organise the masses and strengthen links between the masses and state bodies. The functions of the committees are being constantly broadened. As Fidel Castro has noted, they are an expression of the style of the Cuban revolution that took shape during the actual practice of social transformations.

Socialism is being built in Cuba in involved conditions of a constant fight against the pressure and blackmail of American imperialism which has more than once resorted to actions of a military character That could not help affecting the forms and timing of socialist reforms As Fidel Castro said at the First Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba

We have to note that economic work did not occupy the centre of attention during the first ten years In that first period of the Revolution survival in face of imperialist subversion military aggression and an inexorable economic blockade occupied the nation's principal effort¹

Only subsequently in a situation of relative peace (although the imperialist blockade still exists) Cuba was able with the aid of the USSR and other countries of the socialist community to give its full attention to problems of economic development to reduce its armed forces raise the level of mechanisation and productivity of agriculture and implement a number of important measures in the social field

Our survey of the special features of the building of socialism in different countries fully confirms Lenin's forecast of a variety of roads and forms for creating the new social system

All nations will arrive at socialism—this is inevitable (he wrote) but all will do so in not exactly the same way each will contribute something of its own to some form of democracy to some variety of the dictatorship of the proletariat to the varying rate of socialist transformations in the different aspects of social life There is nothing more primitive from the viewpoint of theory or more ridiculous from that of practice than to paint in the name of historical materialism this aspect of the future in a monotonous grey²

Marxist Leninists when drawing practical conclusions from the experience of building socialism stress the need for a constructive approach to combining the general and the specific in it and oppose any kind of dogmatism in this matter At the same time Marxist Leninist parties are decidedly against underestimating the general patterns and exaggeration of special features This is exceptionally

¹ *Informe del Comité Central del PCC al Primer Congreso* p 50

² V I Lenin *A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism*
Collected Works, Vol 23 pp 69-70

important at this stage. Let us therefore examine it more closely.

Stress on the special nature of a country's path of development and underestimation of the general patterns are characteristic of the idea of national communism, a nationalist opportunist doctrine that rejects the general propositions of the Marxist-Leninist theory of socialism and is aimed at isolating socialist countries and Communist Parties from one another. The advocates of national communism ignore the experience of the revolutionary transformation of society in other countries; above all in the Soviet Union, oppose the unity of socialist countries; deny common patterns of the transition of different countries from capitalism to socialism; and propagate their own special (in essence nationalist) paths for this transition.

The theory of national communism is not an invention of present-day opportunism. Lenin resolutely opposed the attempts of opportunists of an earlier period to play on the national feelings of the proletariat of one country or another and to set it against the working class of other states.¹

Today's nationalist opportunists, encouraged by capitalist propaganda, say they are fighting for the national interests of the working people of their countries; in fact, however, national communism is a nationalist current directed against both the unity of socialist countries and the world communist movement and the true national interests of the people.

One form of rejection of the general patterns developed by Marxist-Leninists is affirmation of the possibility of building various models of socialism, in other words, of building a socialism characterised by other patterns. Models of market socialism and co-operative socialism, for instance, are now being widely advertised. Analysis indicates that they wholly or partially reject the patterns discovered by Marxism-Leninism. They typically, for example, reject the principles of centralised planning, disperse and fritter away social property, renounce the leading role of the Communist Party, wreck the principles of internationalism, and so on.

That kind of model is proposed both for the countries of real socialism and for those that still have to carry out the socialist transformation of society.

We can take as an example the attempts to build models of

¹ See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, 5th Russian edition, Vol. 41 (Politizdat Moscow 1963), p. 459.

socialism for the developing countries of Latin America. At the end of the 1960s the French publicist and philosopher Régis Debray who then held an ultra-leftist position argued for it in *Revolution dans la révolution* denied the role of the party in developing the revolutionary struggle in Latin America, and made an absolute of the guerrilla movement.¹ A sectarian striving to build his own model of revolution counterposed to the Marxist-Leninist theory of socialist revolution led him later in another book to try and demonstrate the inapplicability in Latin American conditions of patterns of revolution tested in practice substantiate a thesis of absence of class consciousness in the working class of Latin America, and develop a sort of original model of socialism that had nothing in common with the experience of building socialism either in European countries or in Cuba. Debray's views thus underwent a logical evolution from a standpoint of leftist extremism to one of a rightist denial of the universality of Marxist-Leninist theory.

The arguments of advocates of modelling the building of socialism are clearly based on a confusing of the general and the specific features of the development of socialism and a substitution when all is said and done of the particular for the general. Having ascribed the principle of a single model of socialism to Marxism-Leninism, they then claim that this model does not cover all the patterns of society's development and does not allow for changes in these patterns the existence of contradictions in public affairs and so on. But Marxism-Leninism has nothing in common with such a principle which means a mechanical uniting of the general and the specific within one model disruption of the dialectical interconnection between the universal and the particular or an absolutising of the concrete experience of building socialism in a separate country.

This kind of approach is employed in particular—with quite definite political intentions—by opportunist writers. Neither the CPSU nor Soviet social scientists for instance have ever put forward any kind of Soviet model of socialism as an obligatory example to be followed. At the same time this concept is actively employed in this sense in the writings of frankly rightist anti-communist ideologists.

When people say they will not follow the Soviet or any other model of socialism already built and will build socialism from the peculiarities of their country (or even region as one

¹ See Régis Debray *Revolution dans la révolution? Lutte armée et lutte politique en Amérique Latine* (Maspero Paris 1967).

² Régis Debray *La critique des armes* (Editions du Seuil Paris, 1974).

has read) one can only reply as follows there is neither a Soviet model of socialism nor an Italian Mexican West European or Asiatic one

It is impossible to reject the one model and impose another all the more since the new model is not yet based on concrete practice and still has a utopian character and sometimes does not even have any recognisable features Whatever model of socialism is taken it can only be employed in practice when the general patterns are observed

As for the bourgeoisie modelling of socialism is always linked one way or another (a) with its attempts to counterpose the Soviet Union and the Soviet Communist Party to other socialist countries and Communist and Workers Parties and (b) with its striving to split Marxism Leninism and undermine the foundations and principles of the socialist system in general

The experience of building the new society in all socialist countries has confirmed that the principal tenets of Lenin's plan of socialist reforms are truly universal It has shown that the special features of socialist development peculiar to separate countries do not go beyond the context of the general patterns At the same time the building of socialism is distinguished by an exceptional wealth of forms and methods of reforms in various spheres of society's affairs demonstrating the unlimited possibilities of revolutionary creativity

4 The Patterns of World Socialism

The leading role of the world community of socialist states in development of the world revolutionary process and in international politics generally makes it extremely important to see how this community taken as a whole is developing and what patterns govern the processes taking place in it how when socialism exists in many countries it is particularly important to study their interaction and co operation

As a world system socialism has specific regularities stemming from the nature of international socialist relations of production

Let us examine in detail the patterns of development of the countries of the socialist community The main pattern of world socialism is that the policy of these countries is based on the principles of socialist internationalism and takes the interests of the socialist community as a whole into consideration This pattern stems from the following circumstances

(1) Socialism is an international phenomenon by its very nature. Its ideals are rooted in internationalism. The countries of the socialist community have a common economic basis, similar social structure and a common ideology: Marxism-Leninism. That is the foundation of socialist internationalism, the principles of which combine the national interests of the socialist countries and the common interests of the socialist community.

(2) Under socialism there is none of the rivalry that divides capitalist states and no objective obstacles in the way of economic co-operation and of eliminating class, political and national barriers.

(3) All the socialist countries have a common enemy: world capitalism. Socialism jointly defends its gains, repels the onslaught of international counter-revolution and helps the revolutionary forces throughout the world.

The solidarity of socialist countries, consolidation of all round links between them and their conversion into a single force stem from the whole course of world development.

An important pattern of world socialism is the deepening of socialist countries' economic interaction. Socialist economic integration is more than the simple sum of the efforts of the countries involved. It promotes acceleration of the development of the individual countries through utilisation of each other's experience, rational division of labour and fraternal mutual aid. Unlike capitalist integration, we must stress the integration of socialist countries promotes harmonious development of the economy of each country, which provides maximally favourable opportunities for the development of social relations and the tackling of pressing political problems.

Finally, and this is a very important point, the economic integration of socialist countries strengthens their independence from the capitalist economy. The Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA), the main organ of the economic co-operation of fraternal socialist countries, provides the conditions for fencing their economies off from the destructive influence of the crisis of capitalism's economic system. Socialist integration is by no means aimed against expanding economic relations with capitalist countries, which can yield certain benefits for socialist countries because of such a factor as the international division of labour.

One pattern of development of the socialist community is harmonious combination of the interests of the countries belonging to it, big and small, and strengthening of the friendship of their peoples. This is governed by the character

of their relations and aims their social nature and socialism's objective need to develop broad economic, political and cultural ties based on respect for the interests of each country and mutual assistance. The relations of socialist countries are based on genuine equality which is the foundation for overcoming the disagreements that arise on one issue or another and for strengthening friendship and co-operation.

Another pattern of socialism is the evening up of the fraternal countries' levels of development. Given equal, mutually beneficial co-operation, the economically less developed countries get comprehensive support from the more developed ones which help them develop their economies at raised rates. As Leonid Brezhnev declared at the 26th Congress of the CPSU--

Nowadays the steady development of any socialist country and successful solution by it of such problems as, say, the provision of energy and raw materials and utilisation of the latest scientific and technical achievements are inconceivable without ties with other fraternal countries.¹

Such a pattern as constant exchange of experience of the building of socialism and its collective generalisation is exceptionally important. This exchange goes on in the most varied realms and in different forms, viz. during the development of co-operation along party and government lines, by way of scientific contacts, broad dissemination of literature and so on.

Yet another pattern of the development of world socialism is the leading role of Communist Parties in controlling all the processes taking place in the socialist community which is implemented during the continuous contacts and co-operation of the central committees of the fraternal parties and through the Warsaw Treaty Organisation and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance. The party and government leaders regularly and comprehensively examine the main issues of the development of the socialist community as a whole at meetings and conferences, co-ordinate policy in various spheres of co-operation and resolve disputed matters arising, allowing for the interests of each country and international socialism.

Finally, we must point out such a pattern as the close co-operation of socialist countries in foreign and military affairs, being based on a class foundation, it reflects

¹ L. I. Brezhnev, *Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU to the XXVI Congress*, p. 12.

the interests of the working masses and peoples of the fraternal countries and so is a new type of inter-state relations

The socialist countries are constantly strengthening the system of collective defence of the gains of socialism. An important step in building this system was the signing in 1955 of the Warsaw Treaty of friendship, co-operation and mutual aid which reliably defends the gains of socialism. In face of imperialism's military preparations and the setting up of aggressive military blocs the socialist countries have been obliged to improve their co-operation in the defence field. Joint military exercises, exchange of experience of military and political training and mutual assistance in the training of military cadres have become the rule in army affairs in the fraternal member-countries of the Warsaw Treaty. The power of the socialist community which has become an important factor in world politics is having a deterrent effect on the aggressive circles of imperialism and so providing favourable conditions for the world revolutionary process.

Lenin pointed out when analysing the changes taking place in his time in the world in connection with capitalism's entry onto its final stage, imperialism, and generalising the experience of the Great October Revolution and early years of the building of socialism that as countries fell away from the capitalist system and took the road of socialism relations of ever closer co-operation would be built up between them. In his view the objective basis for that was the tendency

towards the creation of a single world economy regulated by the proletariat of all nations as an integral whole and according to a common plan. This tendency has already revealed itself quite clearly under capitalism and is bound to be further developed and consummated under socialism.¹

The convergence of socialist nations and states is a long objective process of building a variety of ever closer ties between them.

What did Lenin see as the means for this coming together? Application of the principles of proletarian socialist internationalism. But they are not automatically applied. The appropriate political activity of ruling Communist Parties is needed aimed at co-ordinating the national interests of the separate socialist countries and the common interests of the socialist community.

Here we come to a matter that sometimes evokes conflict

¹ V. I. Lenin, Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and the Colonial Questions, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 147.

ing interpretations viz the problem of combining the international principle that assumes certain obligations of the community of fraternal countries to each socialist country and of each of them to the world system of socialism with national interests and the principles of national sovereignty equality and independence

What is the essence of this combination? As practical experience has shown it is the profound internal unity between the unmistakable tendency of socialist countries to come closer to each other the interweaving of economic ties the strengthening of economic and other co operation and their development within the state boundaries defining the economic and political independence of each country The dialectic of the development of world socialism puts its stamp on manifestations of the latter's patterns The ties of each socialist country while promoting rapid growth of the national economy lead to consolidation of its independence and so of its national sovereignty The sovereignty of socialist states is inseparable from proletarian socialist internationalism and inconceivable without it

The underlying principles of socialist international relations in no way contradict the general democratic principles of equality respect for sovereignty and national independence and mutually profitable co operation Furthermore there is an indissoluble relationship between the principles of socialist internationalism and general democratic principles Recognition of this interconnection however by no means implies identifying them Internationalism has an essential difference from the general democratic principles Its principles are not reducible simply to the efforts of each nation to strengthen the economic might of its own country to recognition of the equality of socialist countries and to free co operation between them but also assume fraternal mutual aid a socialist division of labour and joint defence of the gains of world socialism

A country's national interests on the international plane and internationalism are not one and the same thing Marxism Leninism treats the national and international as a dialectical unity of opposites International socialist interests are generated primarily by the need to develop the world system of socialism as a whole international revolutionary movement they are common interests On the other hand the content of the concept international interests is objective and exists independently of whether we recognise them or not We can only comprehend them to a greater or lesser extent but cannot design or invent their essence It is stupid to assert as some do that one socialist country can obtrude some sort of special sovereignty on other socialist countries Both the

national and the international are objective factors in the development of world socialism irrespective of the will of parties and governments

We must not needlessly say simplify relations in the world system of socialism as is sometimes done ignoring the fact that there are not a few difficulties associated with establishing relations of fraternal friendship between all the countries entering the system. In that connection the point about the character and role of contradictions in the inter-state relations of socialist countries has great polemical sharpness. The history of the socialist system has confirmed the correctness of Lenin's thesis that socialism while eliminating antagonisms does not abolish contradictions.

A characteristic feature of the contradictions inherent in the self-development of world socialism is that they are quite resolvable not being antagonistic within the framework of the new system on the basis of proletarian socialist internationalism through comradely discussion, comparison and co-ordination of the different positions and combining national, state interests and international ones on the basis of Marxist-Leninist principles.

In spite of those who try to distort the dialectic of the national and international in the relations between socialist states every step toward deepening the co-operation of fraternal countries and the parties leading them means a contribution to the real content and enrichment of their national sovereignty and not a retreat from it. The process of convergence of socialist states, Leonid Brezhnev has said

does not obliterate the specific national features or the historical distinctions of the socialist countries. We should see the variety of forms in their social life and economic organisation for what it really is—a wealth of ways and methods of establishing the socialist way of life.¹

The unity of the national and international in the development of world socialism is a concentrated expression of the general patterns of building the new social system.

5 The Stage of Developed Socialism

Socialism which was converted in the nineteenth century from a utopia into a science in the twentieth century has

¹ L. I. Brezhnev *Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU to the XXVI Congress* p. 15

become reality initially in one country and then on the scale of a world system of states. A new socio economic formation has arisen and a society has taken shape whose basis consists in social ownership of the means of production and collective work or as Marx put it a co-operative society based on common ownership of the means of production.

This is a historically young constantly developing society aspiring to the future its development moreover is not mechanical but a dialectical process in the course of which changes accumulate over certain periods of time that carry society to a qualitatively new state and a higher level of growth. In other words the development of socialism is a series of stages in society's progressive movement toward communism the highest phase of the new social formation. And only a concrete historical study of each of these stages in their interconnections can yield a true genuinely scientific idea of real socialism. Long before the socialist revolution Lenin had discussed the general and the specific features of the establishment of the new social system and pointed out the need for

strictly differentiating between stages that are essentially different soberly examining the conditions under which they manifest themselves²

Later after victory of the revolution while giving priority to tackling the theoretical and practical problems of the transition from capitalism to socialism he also examined the prospects for the building of socialism which he synthesised in the concept a developed socialist society³

The historical practice of building socialist society in the USSR and other countries of the socialist community has confirmed Lenin's evaluation of these prospects. Experience has shown that this developed socialist society is a necessary natural historically long period of the formation of the communist system⁴. The 26th Congress of the CPSU paid great attention to developing concepts of developed socialism and enriched them with a whole number of fundamental ideas. Let us consider the principal aspects of developed socialist society in the light of these ideas.

In the economic field developed socialism has the following

¹ Karl Marx Critique of the Gotha Programme. In Karl Marx and Frederick Engels *Selected Works* in three volumes Vol 3 p 17

² V I Lenin The Autocracy and the Proletariat *Collected Works*, Vol 8 p 24

³ V I Lenin Original Version of the Article The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government *Collected Works* Vol 42 p 78

⁴ L I Brezhnev Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU to the XXVI Congress p 103

characteristics highly developed productive forces a powerful advanced industry employing the latest achievements of the scientific and technological revolution and large scale highly mechanised farming based on collective principles. Other objective criteria of developed socialism are a higher level of socialisation of the means of production a coming together of the public (national) and collective farm co-operative forms of socialist property and the organisation of economic processes on the basis of a single economic complex.

In the social field developed socialism is distinguished by the following growth of the working class's leading role in society's development consolidation of its alliance with other strata of the working people an increase in the social uniformity of society and a strengthening of its solidarity and cohesion a heightening of the public's material and cultural standard of living. The 26th Congress of the CPSU drew the following conclusion of fundamental importance a classless structure of society will take shape mainly within the historical framework of mature socialism.¹

In the political field the most important indicators of the maturity of socialism are a raising of the role of the Communist Party in society's affairs the growing of the state of the dictatorship of the proletariat into a socialist state of the whole people and a deepening and all round development of socialist democracy. In the concrete conditions of a multinational country like the USSR an essential attribute of developed socialism has become the comprehensive rapprochement of nationalities and ethnic groups on the basis of socialist internationalism fraternal friendship and the moulding of a new historical international community the Soviet people.

In the realm of ideology the characteristic features of developed socialism are the conversion of Marxism-Leninism into the decisive factor moulding social consciousness and on that basis consolidating society's ideological unity and confirmation of the ideals and principles of communism as the natural standards of the world outlook life and activity of citizens of the socialist state.

In the international sphere developed socialism presumes a strengthening of fraternal friendship and all round co-operation between the parties peoples and states of the socialist community and a coming together of the countries forming it on the basis of the principles of socialist internationalism equality independence and sovereignty.

That is how Marxist-Leninist thought poses the matter of

¹ *Ibid* p 71

developed socialism treating it in a concrete historical way inseparably linked with the realities of the building of socialism. Those who try to evaluate real socialism in spite of these realities treat it in another key. In the writings of capitalist right wing reformist and ultra leftist critics of real socialism and even in certain works of authors who have associated themselves with the revolutionary working class movement one comes across unsubstantiated reproaches that real socialism is too remote from the lofty ideals proclaimed in the socialist theories of the past. In other words the level of maturity of socialism is measured in this case by abstract ideals often remote from scientific communism which are counterposed to actual reality rather than by objective criteria stemming from the practice of building socialism.

Marxist Leninist theory has never posed the task of realisation of abstract ideals of any sort in the revolutionary struggle. That is the radical difference between it and the world outlook of the utopian socialists who initially sketched an ideal and then tried to realise it in practice from which also stemmed their short lived makeshift foredoomed phalansteries communes etc.

From the moment it developed the science of communism opposed conceptions of revolutionary struggle that reduced it to the realisation of an ideal. Marx categorically rejected and ridiculed such a view. The working class he wrote has

no ideals to realise but to set free the elements of the new society with which old collapsing bourgeois society itself is pregnant ¹

Lenin worked perseveringly to get this truth assimilated by the political vanguard of the proletariat. On the road to the October Revolution he repeatedly said in various ways that the job facing the revolutionary forces

did not assume the application of certain theories (an illusion against which Marx always warned socialists) but implementation of the most extreme practical measures ²

Lenin demonstrated the necessity of a whole historical period of transition from capitalism to communism ³ emphasising that it was only possible to carry the day by a steady rise and progress which must be gradual and necessari

¹ Karl Marx *The Civil War in France*. In Karl Marx and Frederick Engels *Selected Works* in three volumes Vol. 2 p 224.

² V I Lenin *Letters from Afar* *Collected Works* Vol. 23 p 330.

³ V I Lenin *Economics and Politics in the Era of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat* *Collected Works* Vol. 30 p 108.

ly slow ¹ Advancement along this road the building of socialism and determination of the final outlines of the new society were linked above all according to him with living practice and the constructive efforts of the labouring masses who are *themselves* building a new life are by *their own experience* solving the most difficult problem of socialist organisation ² In particular it is his greatness which distinguishes him radically from earlier and contemporary exponents of artificially constructed imaginary schemes ideals and models of socialism not tested in practice that he directly and frankly said

We do not claim that Marx knew or Marxists know the road to socialism down to the last detail It would be nonsense to claim anything of the kind What we know is the direction of this road and the class forces that follow it the specific practical details will come to light only through the *experience of the millions* when they take things into their own hands ³

This many sided varied experience of the millions has always of course determined (and always will) the diversity of the concrete forms of achieving a single aim But the point is the variety of the forms and not a variety of essence and types of socialism as regards socialism Marxist Leninist science has introduced full clarity confirmed by the practice of building it in the Soviet Union and other countries

Complacency and smugness are not characteristic of Communists Better than any capitalist and opportunist critics they see their shortcomings and difficulties And it is in order to overcome them that Communists take care to develop criticism and self criticism broadly considering this as a criterion of a party's maturity and an indicator of its confidence in its own forces Tackling of the problems still existing under socialism consists not in glossing over weaknesses and defects but (as Lenin taught) in open criticism of them in order to remedy them the more speedily and radically ⁴

As Leonid Brezhnev said at the 26th Congress of the CPSU

¹ V I Lenin Tenth All Russia Conference of the R C P (B) May 26-28 1921 *Collected Works* Vol 32 p 437

² V I Lenin Letter to American Workers *Collected Works* Vol 28 p 72

³ V I Lenin From a Publicist's Diary *Collected Works* Vol 25 p 285

⁴ V I Lenin Theses on the Fundamental Tasks of the Second Congress of the Communist International *Collected Works* Vol 31 p 185

Far be it from us to think that everything we had was ideal. In the USSR socialism was built in incredibly difficult conditions. The Party hewed its way through virgin land. And nobody knows better than we do what difficulties and shortcomings occurred along the way and which of them have still to be overcome.

We pay close heed to comradely constructive criticism. But we are categorically opposed to criticism which distorts the socialist reality and wittingly or unwittingly does a good turn thereby to imperialist propaganda to our class opponent.¹

Now let us turn to problems of the present stage in the development of real socialism, a more detailed examination of which is called for by the current situation on the world front of the battle of ideas. The point is that a distorted interpretation of these problems and attempts to make political capital from distortion both of their substance and the ways of dealing with them in the practice of real socialism are a substantial part of the campaign of anti-communism and anti-Sovietism being waged in the capitalist world since the end of the 1970s.

It is a matter, first of all, of a group of questions relating to the political organisation of socialist society.

To formulate the main direction in perfecting the constitutional and political structure of socialist countries at the present stage it is briefly a further all-round development of socialist democracy.

By its very nature socialism is profoundly democratic. It is the first formation in history that has laid the socio-economic foundations of genuine democratism, i.e. people's power and rule in the constitutional political sphere, real equality in the social sphere and freedom of the individual. On that principle socialism is inconceivable without democracy; in other words, a society without democracy is not socialism.

If the Communist and Workers Parties of the fraternal socialist countries attach enormous significance today to improving the democratic forms and institutions of public affairs, it is not because a need has arisen for a democratisation of the system allegedly previously absent, as capitalist ideologists like to phrase it. Attention to the problems of democracy is increasing in contemporary socialist society because its steady progress is constantly raising new tasks, and not least in the realm of political development. Economic

¹ L. I. Brezhnev, *Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU to the XXVI Congress*, p. 24.

advance and the great intricacy of economic processes and no less of the machinery of management broad introduction of the advances of science and engineering the rise in the public's standard of education involvement of ever broader strata of the public in the working of the various levels and links of state leadership and administration and the experience gathered in this field—such are some of the main factors determining the mounting attention being paid to questions of democracy in socialist society

Problems of democracy and freedom of the individual have always been at the centre of the world ideological and political struggle Right at the dawn of Soviet rule Lenin warned that capitalism would raise the standard of liberty against us ¹ In recent years the enemies of Marxism Leninism have been shifting the centre of gravity of their anti Soviet and anti-communist propaganda more and more to issues of socialist democracy It is not difficult to understand why (1) The earlier main lines of ideological campaigns hostile to socialism have been completely discredited The acute crisis phenomena that gripped capitalism at the end of the 1970s shattered the myths that socialist society was less capable than capitalist of providing for the material welfare of its citizens and that the capitalist economy had certain advantages over the socialist one (2) With the piling up of economic difficulties and growth of social tension in capitalist countries the tendency to curtail democratic freedoms inseparable from imperialism manifested itself sharply One of the ideological reactions of capitalism's apologists to this acute aggravation of the crisis of capitalist democracy was to step up propagandist attacks on socialist democracy

Precisely because of that the bourgeois ideologists have developed an unrestrained critique of socialist society's real democracy and busied themselves with working out endless recipes for its democratic restructuring declaring that democracy is alien to socialism that it implies as they see it freedom to do what one wants or coexistence of dissenters even when they use dissent to cover actions aimed against the people's fundamental interests and the statutes adopted by them Ideas are even spread that democracy is a long standing tradition only of European nations almost a national feature of them and that there is the democratic political system of the West—and the anti-democratic one of the East

¹ V I Lenin First All Russia Congress on Adult Education May 6-19 1919 *Collected Works*, Vol 29 p 352

The basically unscientific character of bourgeois and petty bourgeois political thinking sticks out a mile from these arguments and is expressed both in arbitrary choice of the criteria of a society's democratism and the separation of political democracy from economic democracy which is the basis of any democracy. Behind them on the one hand is a poorly masked striving to divert the fight of the working people of capitalist countries from its main aim—the fight for those radical changes in property relations without which genuine economic, political and spiritual emancipation of the people is impossible. On the other hand they mask attempts to undermine socialist democracy and justify interference in the internal affairs of socialist states.

Marxist Leninists counterpose a profoundly scientific and principled approach to all that. They demonstrate that it was socialism that first not only proclaimed but actually provided and introduced such political rights and liberties into the practice of public affairs as freedom and equal opportunity of education, freedom of scientific and cultural activity, freedom to enjoy the cultural benefits created by mankind. Man's dream of free choice of occupation is gradually becoming reality under socialism and also freedom of unhindered development of all human aptitudes and capacities. In short, Marxist Leninists treat democracy as a complex, as a whole system that includes economic, socio-political and ideological relations. The foundation of this system, however, is economic democracy: above all the man of labour's emancipation from the yoke of capital, from poverty and unemployment, from uncertainty about the morrow. Solution of the problem of employment and of the social protection of labour, development of democratic standards in the activity of production work collectives based in the final analysis on the activity of trade unions in fulfilling their important role in defence of the rights and interests of the workers—in all these spheres the superiority of socialist economic and social democracy is indisputable.

When Marxist Leninists stress this truth, they thereby display their class-party approach and do not hide it. When the capitalists endeavour to divert workers from this truth, they also thereby display their capitalist class approach, but they hide it, although they themselves very well understand, for example, the meaning of economic domination as the basis of bourgeois democracy and in general of the economic relations for its functioning in the interests of the ruling class. Imperialism and the dominance of monopolies naturally and objectively give rise, irrespective of anyone's wishes, to a tendency toward a consistent limiting of democracy in capitalist society.

Socialist democracy and real people's power contrast with that. Their characteristic feature is that socialist agencies and authorities objectively express the scientifically understood interests of the working people and (in Lenin's words) are organs of administration not only for the working people but also by them themselves¹

As Leonid Brezhnev said in his report to the 26th Congress of the CPSU

The essence of Soviet democracy of democracy in action lies in concern for the common work for the development of production in comparing notes in frank and principled criticism and self criticism and in promoting the socio-political activity of every citizen²

The character, aims and possibilities of socialist democracy can only be appraised objectively from that angle

In that connection a proper understanding of the root difference between capitalist and socialist democracy becomes particularly important

It is unsound to make a mirror comparison so to say of the democratic organisation of society under capitalism and under socialism because democracy is a class concept and its essence is different in the conditions of these opposing socio-economic systems. It is inadmissible to try and mechanically transfer or transplant the principles and forms of bourgeois democracy to the soil of socialism. In socialist countries there is no and will not be any bourgeois democracy as a political form of the dictatorship of the capitalist class just as it is no use trying to find real people's power in the capitalist world

The superiority of socialist democracy is not demonstrated by comparing it mechanically with bourgeois democracy or by a quantitative comparison or by counting (the freedoms say are the same only greater in number). It is a qualitative superiority, an extension of the principles of real democracy in breadth and in depth above all in the decisive sphere of public affairs viz the production-economic relations between people

In a number of capitalist countries the workers have won certain freedoms through stubborn class battles which they can utilise to some extent to defend their interests. The

¹ See V. I. Lenin, Eighth Congress of the R.C.P.(B) March 18-23 1919 *Collected Works* Vol. 29 p. 183

² L. I. Brezhnev, *Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU to the XXVI Congress* p. 86

democratic concessions wrested from the capitalists and growth of democratic opinion's political influence sometimes make it possible to limit the encroachments of the monopolies and their governments on the rights of the working masses to facilitate rallying of the progressive political forces that are fighting the monopolies to tackle the nation's vital problems and promote development of the political struggle. Therefore when we say that socialist democracy is the negation of bourgeois democracy we do not mean suppression of the rights and liberties won by the working people in struggle against the capitalist class and in spite of its resistance. What we mean is dialectical negation and a class approach. This approach assumes (1) that no partial gains in the context of bourgeois democracy can radically alter the proletariat's place in society as an oppressed class cannot lead to a fundamental change in the working people's position in the economic and political system of capitalism and full elimination of unemployment and (2) that these gains remain unstable without a revolutionary break-out from the limits of bourgeois democracy which was and remains a form of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.

The relationship between the economy and politics between the basis and the superstructure in socialist society has become very topical of late.

It is a truism for Marxist Leninists that the mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life.¹ When there is a radical shift in the economic structure of society in its basis it inevitably involves a revolution in the superstructure as well. This is a complicated, contradictory process but its essence is that a change in the mode of production entails a change in the superstructure.

The peculiarity of socialist society is that the institutions of the superstructure in it are consciously moulded and developed in accordance with certain levels or, as Lenin put it, the stages of the economic maturity of communism,² and subordinated to their emergence and progress.

Socialisation and nationalisation of the means of production do not in themselves lead to the appearance, for example, of the system of political power and spiritual culture of developed socialism. The economy does not create ideas and institutions; they are created by people. But they do not create them by their own will but rather in accordance with the prevailing economic conditions and social laws. That is

¹ Karl Marx *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* pp 20-21

² V I Lenin *The State and Revolution Collected Works*, Vol 25 p 476

why the role of the superstructure is great indeed. It stimulates the economic development of socialism by improving both its relations of production and its productive forces i.e. its material and technical basis.

The ideological enemies of Marxism Leninism have been trying of late to deceive the people into thinking that the contradictions between the basis and superstructure were getting sharper under real socialism too. In a book by Bruno Kreisky chairman of the Socialist Party of Austria for example¹ and in the writings of several other leaders of contemporary international Social Democracy it is said that the essence of their disagreements in principle with Communists is not in relation to the forms of ownership of the means of production. They do not even raise objections against social property in the national economies of socialist countries because (as they recognise) the workers do not want and would not permit its replacement by private property. Their difference of principle with Communists they say is in recognition of democracy and freedom of the individual which they allege Communists deny.

These ideas will not stand up to theoretical criticism and are refuted by reality itself. In fact whether or not the superstructure accords with the basis can only be judged by distinct scientific criteria. When it is a matter of socialism the adequacy of the superstructure to the basis and of political structures to the economic and social ones is mainly determined by how far its forms and manifestations correspond to social ownership of the means of production. Understandably there can only be a precise political reflection of a socialised economy with genuine people's power that ensures representation of socially uniform interests and equal involvement of the working people and all the people in the management of society i.e. of the joint owners of the means of production. That is precisely the political system that has been built in socialist countries. When we examine the essence of conjectures about the social superstructure's protracted lagging behind its basis it is not difficult to see that in their authors' view restoration of equilibrium in this case would be achieved by altering the structure of politics so that its subjects would represent contradictory mutually opposed interests rather than common ones. In other words it is proposed to transplant onto the basis of social ownership a superstructure corresponding to a society based on private property relations with all the antagonisms stemming from them.

¹ Bruno Kreisky *Aspekte des demokratischen Sozialismus* (List Verlag Munich 1974)

Communists do not close their eyes to the fact that under socialism the economy may at some moment outstrip politics in some way or politics prove to be not sufficiently realistic in relation say to science. Overtaking and outstripping are as natural given dynamic development of society as life itself in all the variety of its manifestations and forms. But the socialist state also strives to deal primarily with these problems putting forward scientifically substantiated plans of social development and drawing the attention of the public to the administrative and management apparatus and members of the party to such matters as for example the relationship of state and social forms and methods of administration and management current needs of the economy and fundamental research the development of society's material and technical basis and the growth of socialist social relations into communist ones. Special attention is attached to tackling a key task under developed socialism that of ensuring steady growth of the economy's efficiency.

The process of developing a new social consciousness and a socialist superstructure adequate to the basis has begun to depend today in many respects on the scientific and technological revolution and its direct impact on man. This is introducing much that is new into the socio-political affairs of socialist countries and is helping more deeply to realise the sense of the task set by the CPSU and other fraternal parties of combining the advances of the scientific and technological revolution and the advantages of socialism. This revolution is complicating social administration and raising the significance of timely development of a strategic line for a long period ahead and calls for a deepening of the scientific principles of the management of society. At the same time it is altering the position of the individual classes and strata of the population and leading to development of their self awareness and political activity.

Another major theoretical problem is very closely linked with that of the relationship of basis and superstructure viz the place and future of the state in socialist society.

The theory of the withering away of the state during society's progressive movement toward communism is an important part of Marxist Leninist theory. It is necessary to distinguish at least two points in the theoretical conception of the withering away of the state: (1) the beginning of its withering away in general i.e. of the state proper understood as an instrument of coercion and the domination of one class over others; (2) the beginning and process of the withering away of the socialist state.

Lenin advanced the well known idea that the state of the dictatorship of the proletariat (which is the necessary political

and state form of the transition period between capitalism and socialism) is already a semi state i.e. no longer a state in the strict sense of the term¹ Why is that? Because it is an instrument in the hands of the majority of the population and provides democracy for the majority Its main class function is no coercion but organisational economic activity and it is not set up to perpetuate the domination of some one class but ultimately to eliminate classes in general Finally the proletarian state (unlike the capitalist) is not abolished but withers away It withers away however and ceases to be necessary from the internal point of view insofar as the society concerned passes to a classless socially uniform structure This is a long-drawn-out historical process largely conditioned by the character of international relations and the need to consolidate the state's defence functions in order to defend socialism's gains against the aggressive imperialist forces

The critics of Marxism Leninism however busy themselves with a persistent search for contradictions between Lenin's theory of the state and the practice of real socialism Their normal trick is to take separate partial remarks from Lenin's works (especially from *The State and Revolution*) and cite them out of context or to look for statements of his that relate to later stages of the development of the communist formation and cannot be realised today or that could not be realised because of the concrete objective circumstances (international ones in particular) which do not stem from the internal nature of socialism That applies for example to the point about the replacement of a regular army by universal arming of the people The critics moreover ignore the point that ruling Communist Parties while acting in accordance with Lenin's precepts have constructively developed and are developing his theory of socialist statehood starting from the needs and tasks of constantly changing practice This is a process of enriching Lenin's theory not of negating it

An important part of this process for example is the treatment of the question of the state of the whole people as a special qualitative stage in the development of the socialist superstructure on the road to communist social self government The state of the whole people is a natural successor of the state of the dictatorship of the proletariat This point has been widely recognised since it precisely formulates the condition of the political system of mature socialist society And in this connection Marxist Leninist

¹ See V I Lenin *The State and Revolution Collected Works*, Vol 25 p 402

studies devoted to establishing the distinct criteria of the state of the whole people bringing out the substance and character of the socio-economic and political conditions predetermining the development of the dictatorship of the proletariat into the state of the whole people with an enhancement of the guiding role of the working class in society and determining the historical context of the process have acquired particularly great theoretical and practical importance

Adoption of the new 1977 Constitution of the USSR has played a most important role in this. It has absorbed the very rich experience of the Soviet people and the principled conclusions and tenets worked out by the party during constructive generalisation of the practice of building communism. As Leonid Brezhnev noted in the Central Committee's report to the 26th Congress of the CPSU the Constitution gave a concentrated expression to

the most significant changes in the economic, public and intellectual life of Soviet society and the profoundly democratic character of the state of the whole people¹

Soviet democracy continues to develop

The main trend in the political development of Soviet society has become an ever broader and more active involvement of the masses of the working people in management of the country's affairs

Under mature socialism the economic basis of socialist democracy is broadening and civil rights are being filled with a more solid material content corresponding to the level of economic, social and cultural progress attained while the guarantees of these rights have become firmer

During the building of communism all strata of the population are finally adopting the ideological and political position of the working class and the social base of the Soviet state which expresses the will and interests of the workers, peasants, intellectuals and all the nations and nationalities of the country is becoming firmer

The principles of democratism and centralism are closely interconnected in socialist society. The real problem is not to assert one at the expense of the other but constantly to try and get a proper balance between them which is the task of the ruling Communist Parties. Theirs is the responsibility for maintaining the necessary balance between centralism and democratism in the whole system of social management

¹ L. I. Brezhnev *Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU to the XXVI Congress*, p. 85

corresponding to each stage of the building of socialism and communism

Experience indicates that when this balance is disturbed by excessive centralisation there is a danger of a military bureaucratic degeneration of the state machinery. But when on the contrary there is a list to unlimited democratism in the spirit of free play of political forces the leading role of the Communist Party and the socialist state is undermined in consequence which leads to anarchy and even to a danger of restoration of the capitalist order. In other words any deviation from the laws of political affairs objectively inherent in socialism cannot help doing serious damage in this area as in others to the new society's progress and to the working classes dominant in it.

Revolutionaries do not try to speed up the withering away of the socialist state in an artificial way—that would run counter to the natural historical process of social development—but endeavour to improve all its aspects and to involve the working people more and more broadly in its activity. The road to creating the decisive conditions for withering away of the state does lie not through weakening the development of the socialist state system but through its consolidation and all round development. That is one of the decisive conditions for preparing of the communist self management of the future.

Conclusions

The Marxist Leninist theory of the transition from capitalism to socialism brings out a number of general patterns displayed in the political, economic and ideological areas of the building of socialism. This theory drawing on the experience of revolutionary development in various countries advances the issue of the dictatorship of the proletariat to the front rank. In the Soviet Union and other socialist countries industrialisation has been carried out, co-operatives have been formed in agriculture and the national question has been resolved on a common socio-economic basis which has confirmed in practice the Marxist Leninist conclusion on the identical essence of the transition to socialism in various countries.

The dictatorship of the proletariat like the other objective patterns of the transitional period is realised in each country in forms peculiar to it. Study and generalisation of the entire experience of international socialism and its constructive use in building the new society are necessary and extremely important preconditions of Communist Parties' elaboration of

a correct policy of socialist reforms

The development of the world community of socialist states is also characterised by general patterns. These patterns which are conditioned by the international character of socialism are expressed in implementation of the principles of socialist internationalism in a deepening of socialist economic integration and a levelling up of the economic and cultural development of the fraternal countries in a constant exchange of experience in the guiding role of Communist Parties in directing all social processes and in close cooperation of the countries of the socialist community in foreign and defence policy

Developed socialism which has been built in the USSR and is being built in several other fraternal countries is a regular stage in the first phase of the communist formation. It is a stage of the perfecting of socialism on its own basis a stage of the development of mature socialist society into communist society

THE OUTLOOK FOR THE REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS

We have thus examined a set of theoretical and practical issues relative to separate countries and world development as a whole which it seems to me covers all the main fundamentally important aspects of the present day problematic of the transition from capitalism to socialism. In order however not to lag behind the precipitous course of events linked with this transition and the sweeping sometimes unexpected changes now taking place in public affairs and the class struggle we need to examine them in perspective or to quote Lenin from the standpoint not only of the past but also of the future.¹ That is how analysis of the fight for socialism and communism was approached by the 26th Congress of the CPSU where it was posed and tackled in connection with tasks associated with the morrow of world history.

Although this chapter will have something in common with previous ones it will help bring out the general idea of the book and in particular give concentrated expression to the conclusions of the foregoing analysis generalising them in the context of the most essential trends of the revolutionary movement that are opening up new horizons of social progress. These trends are governed by the aims and forms of the fight to maintain and consolidate peace, extend the interaction of real socialism and all the anti imperialist forces and deepen the links of revolutionary theory with the constantly developing practice of the transition to socialism.

1 The Dialectic of the Fight for Peace and a New Social System

The opportunities and prospects for nations passing to socialism can only be properly comprehended and objectively

¹ V I Lenin, Karl Marx, *Collected Works*, Vol 21, p 75

evaluated in today's conditions in close connection with the issues of consolidating peace which in turn cannot be solved out of context of the balance of class forces in the world and the global antagonism of socialism and capitalism revolution and counter revolution

In developing their tactics and strategy in the 1980s Communist Parties while operating in various conditions and putting forward different demands in their programmes start from the point that lasting peace is the paramount main task on whose solution social progress decidedly depends. Because as Leonid Brezhnev said at the 26th Congress of the CPSU

at present nothing is more essential and more important for any nation than to preserve peace and ensure the paramount right of every human being—the right to life¹

Or as Georges Marchais General Secretary of the French Communist Party says in his book *The Hope for the Present*

The fight for peace has become a dominant necessity today for the simple reason that what is at stake is the survival of all mankind. It is becoming the supreme aim of the class struggle on a world level to prohibit imperialism's recourse to war and to ensure transformation of the world toward socialism in peace and by the free choice of every people²

The Marxist Leninist approach to these issues rests on Lenin's theses on the dialectic of peace and revolution profoundly and comprehensively developed in his works. His legacy contains an inexhaustible stock of ideas throwing light on the key interconnections and reciprocal influences between the character and state of the world system of international relations on the one hand and the revolutionary shifts taking place during the replacement of the capitalist formation on the other. These ideas and experience of applying them in practice in the policy of socialist countries and Marxist Leninist parties again and again prove that without a struggle for peace unflagging consistent correctly oriented i.e. aimed against the actual source of the war danger imperialism it is impossible to achieve the workers' lofty social aims and further growth of the influence of socialism in nations affairs

¹ L. I. Brezhnev *Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU to the XXVI Congress* p. 7

² Georges Marchais *L'Espoir au présent* (Editions sociales Paris, 1980) p. 163

As we know Lenin drew the conclusion after the October Revolution that the first socialist revolution had introduced radical changes in world politics had shifted the central axis of international affairs from the sphere of inter imperialist rivalry to the area of struggle of opposing social systems. This conclusion is of principled significance. It is the class conflict between the new social system and imperialism that has become the factor which in Lenin's view must now govern reciprocal relations between peoples and the world political system as a whole.¹ It is impossible without taking that into account to pose let alone correctly tackle a single issue of international politics even if it concerns a most outlying part of the world.²

Today's picture of the world needless to say bears little resemblance to the position when Lenin's theoretical and political creativity was developing and the Soviet state was taking its first steps. But in the unprecedentedly complicated interweaving of the diverse events and currents of world development prevailing in the early 1980s its prospects depend to a decisive extent on the forms of the struggle of capitalism and socialism and the balance of forces between them. Let us examine this in more detail.

The shift from cold war to detente that occurred in the 1970s and the progressive changes associated with it like consolidation of the positions of real socialism the upsurge of the national liberation movement and growth of influence of Communist Parties in capitalist countries all evoked fierce resistance by imperialist reaction which regarded these swings as a threat to its aggressive intentions its plans for intensifying the exploitation of peoples and its rights to interfere in the internal affairs of sovereign states.

Imperialism and above all US imperialism and its military industrial complex have taken the road of undermining detente and aggravating the international situation with the aim of blocking the masses' aspirations for social progress and independence. At the turn to the 1980s there was a change in Washington's policy toward cold war. Employing gimcrack myths about the hand of Moscow and resorting to the most second rate low grade lies and slanders about Soviet foreign policy and its true aims imperialist circles are shamelessly endeavouring to distort the sense of the USSR's solidarity with the struggling peoples of Angola Ethiopia Afghanistan and other countries and to ascribe to the Soviet Union expansionist intentions that are inherently foreign to socialism.

¹ V I Lenin The Second Congress of the Communist International July 19-August 7 1920 *Collected Works*, Vol 31 p 241

² *Ibid*

Was it unexpected this sharp retreat by imperialism from the principles of relaxation of international tension that were gathering strength?

Of course not. Imperialism's present policy is a logical continuation of its strategy in foreign affairs on which its attempts, hopes and plans of solving the conflicts between the opposing social systems by military means have constantly been built for decades. As Marxist Leninists stress, underlying all the actions undertaken by imperialism at the turn of the decade are its persistent unwillingness to recognise the new realities of the world and its attempts to alter the rough balance of forces in world affairs in its favour and halt the course of history.

The increase in imperialist aggressiveness is, of course, clouding the prospects of the world in the 1980s, but there is every ground as well for saying that never in the past did human society have such a potential for eliminating the war danger as it has in our day. That is one of the characteristic dialectical features of the development of international relations today.

In the first years of the Soviet Republic, Lenin taught Communists to understand this dialectic and to take it into account in the complicated, difficult fight for peace, with its thousands of difficulties, and for a restructuring of international relations on the basis of peaceful coexistence, without yielding to illusions but also without giving up in face of the inevitable imperialist attempts to loose the dogs of war.

Peace cannot be concluded only from above. Peace must be won from below, he said.¹ These famous words of Lenin's are still a most important injunction, even now, for all members of the world anti-war front. They put us on our guard against passivity and the feelings of helplessness and defencelessness that arise in certain social circles in face of the powerful forces involved in world politics at state level. The warning is the more topical because erroneous views on the possibilities and outlook for world development became common in the past decade among some peace supporters, including representatives of the working-class movement in certain capitalist countries, which demobilised the masses. How was that displayed in fact?

In the 1970s, with the advance of detente, Lenin's idea of peaceful coexistence of the two systems became popular throughout the world. For the first time in history there was a real chance of rebuilding the whole system of international relations on principles that excluded the use of force, *diktat*.

¹ V. I. Lenin, Meeting of the All Russia Central Executive Committee, November 10 (23) 1917, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 319.

and—the main point—war from them. But in certain circles of the public in capitalist countries this was sometimes presented and interpreted as a kind of euphoric desire for peace and not as an objective need to develop a stable persistent struggle against the forces of war unleashed by imperialism. Lenin's idea of peaceful coexistence however was the result of a generalisation precisely of revolutionary practice and the development precisely of revolutionary theory. He showed that the coexistence of states with different social systems was an objective phenomenon that was manifested however as a tendency not to consolidate peace automatically but in accordance with what socialism and the international proletarian and democratic movement could counterpose to imperialism and its aggressive policy. Capitalist governments he wrote were capable of agreeing to a peace in any way satisfactory to democracy and the working class only when taught a lesson by a series of revolutions.¹

Let us now examine the relation between realisation of the idea of peaceful coexistence and the inevitable swings entailed by further development of the class struggle. Is there not an irreconcilable contradiction here that can only be resolved in one of two ways viz either by a weakening and curtailing of the revolutionary movement (for the sake of détente) or rejection of the restructuring of international relations on the principles of peaceful coexistence (for the sake of activating the fight against imperialism and power of the monopolies)?

There are not a few ideologists and politicians who take diametrically opposite stands but who nevertheless insist that peaceful coexistence and revolutionary struggle are incompatible. What are the views of those who share this opinion and why are they unsound?

A standpoint that treats peaceful coexistence as a kind of division of the world and guarantee of the maintenance of capitalism has become traditional among imperialist ideologists. This is the premise from which they conclude that only political retreat of the left within capitalist countries and curtailment of the progressive anti imperialist movements in the area of the national liberation struggle can really confirm the viability and effectiveness of peaceful coexistence. Any sharpening of the class struggle in modern capitalist society any swing in favour of the democratic progressive forces and any signs in general of a growth of a crisis situation in the national affairs of any capitalist country all have to be

¹ See V I Lenin *The Question of Peace* *Collected Works* Vol 21 p 292

regarded (they hold) as a direct breach of the understandings between states that underlie detente¹

The fallaciousness of this scheme is not that it establishes an interconnection between detente and the revolutionary movement (a connection that does in fact exist) but that it alleges that the class and political struggle in non socialist countries is organised and directed from outside. With aggravation of the international situation capitalist ideologists try to put about a new version of the idea of export of revolution by means of fictions about the planned synchronisation of socialism's peace initiatives and the upsurge of anti imperialist struggle. It must be obvious that this absurd invention in a way touches on the broader actual problem of the relation between the policy of detente followed by the socialist countries and their principled positions of solidarity with the revolutionary forces in capitalist countries and the area of national liberation struggle.

In their interpretation of this issue capitalist ideologists have developed two main versions. One is the idea mentioned above that depicts the socialist policy of detente as an instrument for exporting revolution. The other is a kind of mirror image of this and amounts to the thesis that socialist states and the Communist and Workers Parties leading them will lose interest in the progress of revolutionary movements once they have got an improvement in the international climate and will then not display their former readiness to support those movements actively. The aim of the first of these ideas is clearly to discredit detente. The second is intended to cause a split in the world's revolutionary forces to sow distrust of the socialist community in the international working-class and national liberation movement. The two ideas are related even the same in their class essence. But each in itself contradicts the other so that their simultaneous presence in the capitalist class's ideological and political schemes today once more emphasises the bankruptcy of the initial premise on which both rest viz the idea of the incompatibility of detente and revolutionary struggle.

The relation between the policy of peaceful coexistence and the revolutionary struggle of the working class and liberation

¹ A large part of the capitalist press listed the development of events in Indochina and the victorious conclusion of the liberation struggle of the peoples of Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea as breaches of the spirit and principles of detente. The revolutionary events in Portugal following overthrow of the fascist dictatorship and success of the national liberation movement in the former Portuguese colonies were given a similar interpretation. Views were expressed on every hand that such things as growth of the influence of Communist Parties and the victories of the revolutionary democratic forces in Ethiopia, the South Yemen, Afghanistan, Nicaragua, and other countries profoundly contradicted detente.

forces is also not always properly appreciated in our view by some members of the anti imperialist movement. The view is expressed for example that capitalist countries abandoning cold war in the 1970s is evidence of a shift in principle in imperialism's policy and of its alleged growing willingness to make concessions in general. Voices were even heard in that connection talking of the possibility of building socialism under NATO. Clearly such views have something in common with the capitalists' conceptions described above in which a relaxation of international tension was considered a means of weakening social tensions.

While supporting the socialist countries steady striving for peace Communists at the same time have no intentions of allowing themselves to be strangled to death for the sake of peace.¹ They unanimously oppose denying peoples right to fight for national freedom on the pretext of maintaining peace oppose their being deprived of opportunities to choose their road of social development independently and oppose a multiplying of Chilean tragedies while the revolutionary forces of the world stand aside from it all -

There are people in capitalist countries who stand for peace but who are inclined at the same time to think that both sides are equally responsible for the supercharging of tension (an idea readily supported by capitalist propaganda). Such errors and misconceptions are possible. Even when one is a sincere peace supporter it is not difficult (as Lenin warned) to lose one's way

in the thickets the labyrinth of diplomatic tricks a labyrinth which at times is artificially created and made more intricate by people classes parties and groups who like to fish in muddy waters or who are compelled to do so.²

It is very possible if one loses sight of the fact that any government policy home or foreign has its roots in the economic interests of the dominant classes or if one buries in oblivion propositions which constitute the basis of the Marxist world outlook.³

Marxist Leninists are well aware that the craving for armed expansion and militarism is a natural phenomenon engendered (as Lenin's work on imperialism demonstrated) in the bowels of capitalist society given the domination of monop-

¹ V I Lenin Interview with Lincoln Eyre Correspondent of the American Newspaper *The World* *Collected Works* Vol 42 p 177

² V I Lenin Report on Foreign Policy Delivered at a Joint Meeting of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee and the Moscow Soviet May 14 1918 *Collected Works* Vol 27 pp 365-66

³ *Ibid* p 365

ly And while a peace policy is organically inherent in socialism for capitalism (which always harbours in itself a danger of war) it is something that is being imposed on it by the socialist revolutionary, and democratic forces

It is not just that however It is important to stress another point the views mentioned above when they penetrate the working class movement disorient it befuddle workers class consciousness and weaken their fight for peace It is obvious to Communists and all the world's masses of working people that peace and detente can only be reliably secured by persistent political struggle and the unflagging efforts of all the peace loving public to curb and isolate the aggressive bellicose circles of imperialism

The 26th Congress of the CPSU once more stressed the USSR's determination in unity with fraternal socialist states to uphold detente as the dominant trend of international affairs That is not just a declaration of intent It is concretised in the initiatives taken by the Congress which open up broad opportunities for dealing with the issues most troubling the world

The Congress posed as paramount aims the development of many sided activity for a radical improving and normalising of the international situation deepening of relations of confidence between states with different social systems attenuating and finally ending the arms race extending the area of operation of measures to prevent the rise of hotbeds of military tension the continuing of negotiations with the USA on the limitation and reduction of strategic weapons and preservation of everything positive already achieved in this area to establish a moratorium on the stationing of new medium range nuclear missiles in Europe by the member countries of NATO and the USSR to hold a special summit session of the UN Security Council so as to find the keys to improving the international situation and preventing war Such were the concrete tasks the Congress put on the practical agenda of world politics When setting them out in the Central Committee's report Leonid Brezhnev said

Not war preparations that doom the peoples to a senseless squandering of their material and spiritual wealth but consolidation of peace—that is the clue to the future¹

The foreign policy ideas initiatives and proposals of the 26th Congress are an organic continuation of the Peace Programme put forward by the 24th Congress and developed by the 25th

¹ L I Brezhnev *Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU to the XXVI Congress* p 41

and a new stage in the development of the international strategy of the CPSU and Soviet government

Marxist Leninist parties work out their political strategy taking into account a concrete but necessarily class approach to events in accordance with a scientific Leninist methodology of historical analysis of the links between peace and revolution. How are the key issues involved in the very complicated problematic generated by the dialectical interconnection of peace and revolution tackled on the basis of this methodology?

(1) Marxist Leninists treat the problem of peace as one decided in the course of class revolutionary struggle. While insisting on a real securing of national independence and consequently freedom of social choice for every country and every nation, Marxist Leninists define their understanding of detente as a process that in no way paralyses the dynamics of world revolutionary development.

(2) Marxist Leninists start from the premise that normalisation of the international political situation is an issue that has to be tackled in class anti-imperialist anti-monopoly struggle in capitalist countries and the area of national liberation movements, as well as directly in the area of relations between the states of the opposing social systems.

(3) Communist and Workers' Parties regard the fight for peace as an inseparable part of the revolutionary strategy of the working class. In opposition to capitalist ideologists and opportunists of right and left who present detente in one way or another as the antithesis of the revolutionary movement, Communists see the struggle for a peaceful restructuring of international relations as a factor favouring consolidation of the political positions of the working class and all democratic anti-imperialist forces.

The parties of the revolutionary working class movement, while considering it their obligation to take a firm stand on positions stemming from a scientific class understanding of the issues of world politics, do not reject co-operation with representatives of other social strata and political forces in the common interest of improving international affairs. They very well understand, for example, that it is not so bad for peace when top-level statesmen of certain capitalist countries join the leaders of socialist countries in recognising the need for possibility and usefulness of detente in a situation of mounting international complexity. When Lenin was leading the proletarian state, he constantly drew attention to the point that when a revolutionary party has state power, it must know how to establish and develop contacts with the pacifist-minded wing of the capitalist class.

The socialist countries and Marxist Leninist parties are

striving to make maximum use of all the possibilities for securing peace. In their peace policy they are opening up bright prospects before the nations for consolidating peace and advancing further along the path of social progress.

2 The Main Trend

Imperialism is the eve of the socialist revolution in our day. One can hardly overestimate the significance of that conclusion of Lenin's for the world revolutionary movement. It determines the social perspective of every struggle being waged by the forces of social progress in the last quarter of the twentieth century. This perspective is a socialist one and is not just an aim desired by arbitrarily chosen and corresponding to the interests of the working people but is the objectively governed and only possible outcome of consistent development of the fight against all forms of oppression and exploitation in modern capitalist society. It was in this sense that Lenin said that any liberation democratic progressive movement under imperialism was a component of the world process whose content was the socialist and in the long run communist transformation of the world.

Today all revolutionary movements are in fact objectively affected by this process and are directly involved in it or indirectly encourage it. That is a pattern that no one can alter. Why? On the one hand because as the tasks of the anti-feudal national liberation general democratic struggle are tackled in various countries the logic of the revolutionary movement's development inevitably faces them with the objective of passing from exploiter formations to a socialist reconstruction of society. On the other hand the tackling of these same tasks is more and more closely tied up by the revolutionary forces with scientific socialism which (as history indicates) ensures the fullest and most consistent carrying out of democratic reforms. In today's conditions a socialist perspective in one way or another orients the development of every anti-imperialist revolutionary liberation movement.

All that implies a strengthening of the socialist bias of the world revolutionary process and an objective extension of the historical arena of the socialist revolution.

The decisive factor in the development of this trend to real socialism which has inevitably operated as the leading force of world social progress since October 1917. But it is now that its gigantic potential for affecting the course of the world revolution and the fight against imperialism for peace and democracy is being disclosed with maximum force. All

genuinely revolutionary progressive forces are aware that the social progress of nations and the prospects of the world revolutionary movement depend in the most direct way on the power and influence of the socialist community. This is due to several circumstances, some of which we shall now examine.

First of all, the development programmes of the socialist countries for the 1980s adopted by the CPSU and other fraternal parties are permeated with historical optimism and are profoundly peaceful. While imperialism's ideologists and politicians look to the future with fear, justifiably afraid of new economic and social upheavals, and while they are inclined to look for panaceas for all ills in an intensifying of the arms race, the states of the socialist community, on the contrary, are putting forward peaceful plans of constructive building intended for many years ahead, and it is in this that they display their firm confidence in their forces and the future. The programme for the economic and social development of the USSR for the period from 1981 to 1990, adopted by the 26th Congress of the CPSU, which generalised the USSR's very rich practical experience of communist construction and took into account the diverse experience of the other states of the socialist community, embodies the party's strategy and tactics on the root problems of socio-economic development in the concrete historical circumstances of the 1980s.

According to the programme, this decade will be a major new stage in the development of the material and technical base of communism, in developing social relations and in moulding the new man. During this period it will be necessary to ensure that the opportunities and advantages of the society of mature socialism are utilised to the fullest extent and to increase considerably its material and cultural wealth, the production and scientific technological potential. The social foundation of the USSR—the unbreakable alliance of the workers, peasants and intellectuals—will become stronger and the friendship of peoples will be further consolidated.

The plans for the building of socialism and communism adopted by the 26th Congress of the CPSU and congresses of the fraternal parties held in 1980-1 are scientifically based. Their goal is quite clear, namely that the current decade of the twentieth century should be marked by nations' advance along the road of social progress and peace.

What concretely is the significance of these plans for the world revolutionary process? And what perspectives will be opened up by implementing them?

(1) Growth of the material potential of the socialist community will mean an extension of the economic, political and defence possibilities of all the world's revolutionary forces.

which have power at their disposal in the form of real socialism organised on a state and international scale

(2) The socialist states fulfilment of their socio economic political and cultural programmes will strengthen the revolutionising impact on the nations of the world of the new organisation of society which excludes any form of exploitation and oppression provides genuine social and political equality guarantees workers the broadest democratic rights and provides the conditions for economic and cultural progress

(3) Socialist countries realisation of their plans for the 1980s will considerably increase their experience of constructive reforms which will be a priceless set of the revolutionary forces of the whole world and will be broadly used by them in both theoretical and practical activity

(4) The socialist countries will be able more effectively to ensure irreversibility of the world revolutionary process paralyse the forces of imperialism block its attempts to export counter revolution and help progressive regimes beat off international reaction's aggressive manoeuvres

(5) Growth of the power and influence of the socialist community will create more favourable circumstances for free choice by the peoples of other countries of the ways and forms of social development and for their advance to socialism

When appraising the international significance of real socialism's development plans the enemies of Marxism Leninism grossly distort their effect on the world revolutionary process alleging that they are oriented on spheres of influence and even on achievement of world domination. Statements like that have no basis. Socialism as a system that has a future is not opposed to extending its influence but unlike under imperialism these spheres of influence are defined by social rather than geographical boundaries (or as the capitalist press now puts it by shields or special interests in various parts of the world). The point at issue is influence on the minds of working people. Such influence of course is dangerous to imperialism but it does not threaten the peace and security of nations.

Elimination of the dominance of private property in the means of production and on that basis of capitalist competition and the economic expansion of capital provides conditions in socialist society in which there are no classes and social strata or groups interested in war or the arms race. Under socialism there are no capitalist monopolies striving by their very nature with the help of the policy of a state that mainly represents their interests to secure the most favourable conditions for realisation of capital i.e. to seize zones of

primary products consolidate their business dealings in countries where capital can be more profitably invested because of the cheapness of labour and so on Under socialism there are also no specific corporations of the military industrial complex waxing rich through the production and modernisation of missiles nuclear submarines and other weapons making double and triple the profits of enterprises in the civil sector of industry There is also therefore no brainwashing of the masses consciousness by means of a powerful ideological apparatus in the spirit of nationalism and jingoism that is a necessary condition for making maximum profits out of the arms race

On the contrary the very nature of socialism is such that it needs peace for its own successful development as Lenin remarked Peace he said will open channels for our influence a hundred times wider ¹ And if socialism has to create military defence forces no one makes a fortune out of it on the contrary the people forego necessities They give up things in order to defend what is most precious namely life and the right to build that life in their own way and in the interests of working people

Let us now pass to another point which is the centre of a lively discussion in our day that of the significance of the example of socialist construction for development of the world socialist revolution As we know this was first posed in a scientific way by Lenin who said

We are now exercising our main influence on the international revolution through our economic policy
The struggle in this field has now become global Once we solve this problem we shall have certainly and finally won on an international scale ²

The critics of real socialism claim by manipulating techno-economic indices that the aim posed by Lenin is unrealisable in the foreseeable future since even after carrying out long term economic programmes socialism will still lag behind capitalism in these indices

What is the answer to that?

(1) The gap in levels of economic development between capitalism and socialism is steadily being narrowed, and in some areas the socialist countries have gone ahead It must also be remembered that a number of socialist countries were

¹ V I Lenin Ninth Congress of the R C P (B) March 29-April 5 1920
Collected Works Vol 30 p 453

² V I Lenin Tenth All Russia Conference of the R C P (B) May 26-28 1921 *Collected Works*, Vol 32 p 437

economically backward before the revolutions and experienced severe economic disruption during the war. The measure of the advance of socialism should therefore not only be the ratio of the absolute figures of development of the socialist and capitalist economies but also the dominant trends in this respect. Comparison of these trends demonstrates the undoubted superiority of the socialist economy which is developing much faster than the capitalist. That is the general trend characteristic on the whole of the development of the socialist economy. In one country or another of course and in one period or another its development may be disturbed by unfavourable circumstances (crop failure, energy problems, difficulties in foreign trade and so on) or by mistakes in managing the national economy. But in the final analysis it is forging ahead.

(2) The levels of economic and social development reached by the socialist countries allow them to tackle more and more complicated large scale tasks and to make the 1980s a decade of great new deeds and gains. The CPSU, relying on the powerful economic foundation laid in past years and on the superiority of mature socialism, set two mutually connected complex tasks at its 26th Congress, namely (a) to ensure further social progress and the carrying out of a broad programme for increasing national prosperity and (b) to ensure all round economic development through an intensification of social production, raising of its efficiency and effectiveness and acceleration of scientific and technological progress. Stable growth of production with simultaneous qualitative improvement of the whole economic process and more effective use of the internal resources inherent in the socio-economic system of socialist society are thus the main determinant feature of the present stage of development of the socialist economy. This is due in no small way to the advantages of socialism stemming from socialist integration, the internationalist principles of the solidarity and mutual aid of fraternal countries and from constant exchange of experience of the building of socialism.

(3) When we are analysing problems of the development of socialist countries we have to take criteria that reflect the whole set of socio-economic relations. While socialism has eliminated all forms of oppression and exploitation, these are still incontrovertible features of capitalism and conditions of its existence, while the whole product and the profits of the socialist economy belong to the nation, the people of labour and are used in their interests, the most efficient capitalist production is first and foremost a source of enrichment of monopolists and a sphere of exploitation of the working class while automation and rationalisation of production improve

people's living conditions under socialism and lead to development of man's spiritual capabilities in capitalist society they aggravate the problem of employment and convert the worker into an appendage of the production process while socialism provides genuine social and political equality of all the members of society capitalism constantly reproduces a polarisation of wealth and poverty and preserves the power and privileges of a dominant minority while socialism eliminates the social causes of such phenomena as unemployment racism organised crime and political terrorism they remain deeply rooted in the world of capital and ever expanding standards of public life

The opponents of Marxism Leninism often try to weaken the impact of its example by distorting the real reasons for socialism's growing pains. The nub of their falsification is to put the blame for any difficulty onto the social system of socialism to reduce the causes of all shortcomings to the very principles of the socialist set up and to pass them off as an expression of the objective patterns of socialism and so discredit it in the eyes of the masses

Scientific socialism makes no claim to be a guarantee against mistakes but it has the chance by consistently following the principles of Marxism Leninism to take correct decisions for the root problems of the building of socialism and to eliminate miscalculations made when carrying these decisions out. That is why the Communist Parties of the socialist community carefully take the objective laws of the development of socialism into account in their long term plans and in their measures to implement them and consistently follow Lenin's theory of the building of the new society which ensures pursuit of a proper political course

In spite of the attempts of the enemies of socialism to blacken the new social system its influence is steadily growing. It is with it and its progress that the revolutionary anti-imperialist forces of the world link the future of humankind. Clear evidence of that was given by the speeches of the guests at the 26th Congress of the CPSU representing various contingents of the world revolutionary process. Socialism said Mengistu Haile Mariam Chairman of the Provisional Military Administrative Council of Socialist Ethiopia has become the lodestar for all who are striving for genuine freedom¹

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union Leonid Brezhnev has said

¹ *The Words of Friends* p 492

*has always striven to make full use of all inner potentialities to strengthen and promote socialism and communism to the utmost in the Soviet Union and at the same time to support and develop the revolutionary struggle throughout the world*¹

The countries of the socialist community in which the Soviet Union is in the vanguard are playing a special historical role in development of the revolutionary process. The progress of the world's revolutionary forces decidedly depends on their achievements on the capacity of their ruling parties to make the most of the opportunities inherent in the new social system and on the cohesion and solidarity of the socialist community. Consolidation of the unity and co-operation of the Communist Parties of socialist countries therefore meets the interests of the whole Communist and workers' movement and of all contingents of the world revolutionary process. All that provides the preconditions for further growth of real socialism's influence on the international revolutionary movement.

A factor strengthening the socialist trend of the world revolutionary process in the 1980s is the new upswing of the working class movement in industrially developed capitalist countries. The importance of this stream of the revolutionary struggle is that these countries are the centre of international capitalism and the main base of the capitalist class's fight against the world revolutionary process. With the present aggravation of the crisis of the capitalist system the proletariat's fight has aspects indicating that new prospects have been opened up before this stream and that the possibilities of more effective action by the working people aimed at a socialist transformation of society are growing. As Marxist Leninists see it, the need to pose social issues

not only in the sense of explaining the past but also in the sense of a bold forecast of the future and of bold practical action for its achievement.²

is becoming most important in the present situation.

Today when the numbers and political activity of the working class on the one hand have grown steeply and the social basis of left socialist currents has broadened and been consolidated and when on the other hand conditions more favourable for transforming the social system have taken shape because of the changes in the balance of world forces

¹ L. I. Brezhnev *Following Lenin's Course* (Progress Publishers, Moscow 1972) p. 19

² V. I. Lenin *Karl Marx Collected Works* Vol. 21 p. 72

the interests of the fight against capitalism are particularly sharply posing the issue of organising collaboration of all parties and organisations of the working class movement above all of Communists and Socialists and of making their joint actions more effective Marxist Leninist parties are working to develop co operation with Socialists and other left forces on a platform that would present broad opportunities for joint struggle while not limiting the ideological and political independence of each of the allies

Communists consider it important to give more active support to national movements whose significance has become inestimable in separate countries in recent years Eoin O Murchu member of the National Executive Committee of the Communist Party of Ireland for example has said that some leaders of the Irish labour movement see active participation in the national movement for independence as a diversion in Irish conditions from the struggle for socialism ¹ Marxist Leninists think such an approach deeply mistaken and sectarian

Another group of tasks set by Communists in the 1980s is linked with activising the fight against neocolonialism Marxist Leninists note that there are signs of passivity in the working class movement of several countries and a weakening of the internationalist traditions that were particularly strong in the years of the struggle of the proletariat of the metropolitan countries for emancipation of the colonies and against imperialist attempts to suppress the national liberation movement in Algeria Vietnam Indonesia and other countries In some circles of the working class movement in Western countries it has become a common view that unity of the working-class and national liberation movements has lost the meaning it used to have since the colonies have won independence The colonies winning of political independence has not altered the character of imperialist policy toward them The nations of most countries in Asia Africa and Latin America continue to be the objects of brutal exploitation by imperialism The level of exploitation moreover is continually rising which means that co-operation of the working-class movement of capitalist countries and the forces

¹ See *World Marxist Review* 1981 24 62 69

² The profit drawn from those countries by foreign monopolies is three to ten times as great as the capital exported to them and the annual outflow of funds to imperialist countries—a consequence of neocolonial exploitation—is more than \$100 billion According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development the indebtedness of African Asian and Latin American countries rose more than fourfold between 1971 and 1979 from \$87 billion to \$391 billion while the annual payments of various kinds for credit and loans increased sevenfold in the same period from \$10.2 billion to \$72

of national liberation is not only not weakening but on the contrary is getting stronger. The proletariat of the industrially developed capitalist countries and their vanguard organisations have a leading role to play in this since they are better prepared politically and organisationally and have immense experience of participation in the movement of solidarity with the fight of oppressed peoples.

Extension of the socialist trend within the world revolutionary process is not only taking the line of development of the working-class movement in industrial capitalist countries, but also one of developing the revolutionary struggle of the peoples of countries already emancipated from national oppression. The barrier that separated the working class of capitalist countries from the peasant and petty bourgeois masses that formed the basis of the national movements in the colonies and semi-colonies has now been broken. In today's conditions the forces of the proletarian revolution and of the fight against national colonial oppression are on the same side of the world's barricades; they have merged into a single world revolutionary process. While preserving in the main its non-proletarian socially heterogeneous nature, the fight for national liberation is objectively becoming an inseparable part of the international anti-imperialist movement, part of the world transition from capitalism to socialism, and moreover a very active part with great potentialities.

That is precisely how contemporary revolutionary thought treats it, as was convincingly demonstrated, for example, by the presence at the 26th Congress of the CPSU of 123 delegations from Communist Workers' national democratic and other parties and organisations, including 78 from countries in Asia, Oceania, Africa and Latin America.

The peculiarities of the situation in each of these areas which constitute the area of national liberation struggle cannot be ignored, but a Marxist-Leninist analysis helps distinguish the trends inherent in all the contemporary revolutionary development of this extensive area of the world.

It is primarily the trend of development of countries with a socialist orientation that have chosen the road of socialist development. Speaking of the similarity of the main trends of their moulding, Leonid Brezhnev pointed out the following elements: the gradual elimination of positions of imperialist monopolies; the local big bourgeoisie and feudal elements; restriction of the operations of foreign capital; securing of the commanding heights in the economy for the public sector.

billion. Even on the World Bank's most optimistic forecasts, developing countries will by 1990 be using at least four fifths of all fresh loans to service their existing debt. (*The Financial Times*, August 18, 1980)

transition to planned development of the productive forces and encouragement of the co-operative movement in the countryside raising of the role of the working masses in public affairs gradual strengthening of the state machinery by local cadres devoted to the people anti imperialist foreign policy Revolutionary parties expressing the interests of the broad masses of the working people are becoming stronger in all these countries ¹

The leaders of the foreign delegations showed by concrete examples in their addresses to the Congress that the progressive forces in developing countries were becoming more and more convinced during their tackling of political and socio-economic problems that the framework of capitalism was too narrow even for realising general democratic demands and did not let the masses of the people enjoy the fruits of economic progress

Only when they have taken the road of socialist development can former colonies and semi-colonies overcome their backwardness and be converted into developed modern and independent states It is no accident therefore that the high road of the national liberation movement wherever the masses of the people have come into movement is the road of struggle against both pre-capitalist relations and the capitalist system Hence it is inevitable that national revolutions develop into social ones ²

As we have already remarked the pattern of this qualitative turning point in the emancipation struggle of the peoples was brought out by Lenin who truly prophetically said that the movement against foreign oppression (the upsurge of which he had directly observed and analysed) would certainly have to be turned against the system of class capitalist exploitation And in our day this qualitative shift in the world national liberation movement has taken place which once more confirms the theoretical depth and clarity of vision of Leninism the fight for national liberation has begun to take on a distinctly expressed social content

The tasks associated with a radical restructuring of the whole organisation of public affairs and re-education of all strata of the population and all the people on the basis of a revolutionary democratic ideology are exceptionally complicated But unless they are tackled as both the positive and the negative experience of several countries has shown

¹ See L. I. Brezhnev *Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU to the XXVI Congress* p 17

² See for example the fraternal addresses of Mengistu Haile Mariam (Ethiopia) José Eduardo dos Santos (Angola) Ali Nasser Muhammad (People's Democratic Republic of Yemen) Marcelino dos Santos (Mozambique) and others

successful movement toward socialism is out of the question

States taking the road of socialist development have at the same time to build a new material and technical basis and improve the working people's life. That is not easy to do the more so since most of them are economically extremely backward countries. The aid of the socialist community helps them hold out against the policy of neocolonialism and to follow a line of freeing themselves from dependence on the world capitalist economy. At the same time they cannot and do not want to depend solely on this aid. As Abdoulaye Diallo representing the Democratic Party of Guinea said at an international conference in Berlin

Countries that have embarked upon socialist development need metal, cement and equipment. But the entire quantity of the required metal or cement cannot be imported. However large the assistance from socialist and other states, the developing countries cannot be supplied with all the equipment they want. We must combine our efforts with the socialist states and together work out how best to organise mineral surveys and the exploitation of energy resources and how to finance such projects. We need coherent, reliable plans. Unless there is a firm material basis, socialism cannot be built.¹

Imperialism's policy in regard to its former colonies, unlike socialism's policy, is to prevent them standing on their own feet. The monopolies retard industrial development in every way, especially the development of progressive industries, endeavour to confine the training of local specialists primarily in Western universities in which they are indoctrinated with capitalist ideology. They decline developing countries as well the right to use the latest advances of science and engineering, exert efforts to ensure that the funds obtained from the sale of primary commodities (in recent years this is particularly typical because of the increased price of oil) are not employed for development of the home economy but are invested in the banks of imperialist countries and so on.

One of the most important trends in the national liberation area in today's circumstances (and as experience shows this trend will become more important in coming years) is the transition of a considerable number of revolutionary democratic parties to the standpoint of scientific socialism. Speaking at the Berlin conference mentioned above, Sergio

¹ See *World Marxist Review* 1981, 24, 2, 67. The conference was on the theme: Against Imperialism for Social Progress.

Vieira member of the Central Committee of the Liberation Front of Mozambique (FRELIMO) said

Bitter class battles made it vital that the proletariat which acts in close unity with the peasantry—its main ally—and with progressive elements of other sections of the working people should have a vanguard party guided by scientific ideology. The formation of the party was an imperative of revolutionary development¹

The change in the content of the national liberation struggle and its growing anti imperialist and ultimately socialist orientation which is expressed in building the foundations of socialism is largely posing the question of the future development of emancipated countries in a new way. Experience has shown that some developing countries proclamation of a line on socialism by passing the capitalist road of development has been a kind of screen a propagandist manoeuvre a protective cover for a nationalist chauvinist and sometimes anti-communist policy. This danger increases the significance of vanguard parties in the fight for socialism. But it by no means signifies that intermediate or middle strata and groups of the population including revolutionary democrats are completely ousted from this struggle and that its leadership must necessarily fall to the organised industrial proletariat and its main ally the peasantry although such a development of the revolution is more radical of course and it is one that the Communist Parties of several Latin American and African countries are orienting themselves on. When considering the position of most African and Asian states for example one has to take their industrial backwardness into account and the relative smallness numerically of the proletariat. It is therefore quite natural and logical that the national liberation movement in them often operates at the stage of radical social reforms under the leadership of political forces expressing the interests not just of the working population but also of petty bourgeois strata. In several countries in Asia Africa and Latin America leaders have come from the ranks of the progressively minded military and patriotic intelligentsia whose social roots are deep in the masses of the people who have formed the core of the national movement and have been able to give it an anti imperialist direction. With intensification of the general crisis of capitalism and extension of the impact of the ideas of scientific socialism the progressive part of the middle strata is also capable in the future (under pressure from below

¹ *World Marxist Review* 1981 24 1 24

and with the support of countries with progressive regimes and of the world revolutionary and national liberation movement) of entering into an alliance with the working class and becoming actively involved in the anti imperialist struggle

It would therefore be wrong to think that the tendency for the peoples of developing countries to pass to a socialist road will lead to a withering away of the general democratic principle of the national liberation revolution. On the contrary it will not only be maintained politically but will be more fully developed though on a new different social basis. As Lenin repeatedly said even in a socialist revolution made directly by the proletariat against the capitalist class the general democratic and national movements representing the interests of the most varied groups merge. The social revolution growing from the national movement cannot moreover be converted into a pure socialist revolution and lose touch with its general democratic beginnings. But that in no way prevents it from leading countries and nations right to the point beyond which lies the direct road to socialism. This road will only be successful when representatives of the forces under whose leadership the anti feudal anti imperialist revolution is being made become with time as Fidel Castro has said ever stauncher revolutionaries firmly pass to the standpoint of Marxism Leninism and build a party of Lenin's type.

From what we have said above it is not difficult to conclude that the highroad in today's conditions is to deepen the interdependence of the revolutionary movements in various countries and at the same time broaden their scale. At the dawn of the labour movement only small groups of workers in a few countries put forward slogans of inter nationalism but now the community of socialist states operates under them and also the working class and its allies in the non socialist area of the world and the national liberation movement.

Lenin stressed that the more the revolution develops the more the bourgeoisie rally together.¹ That has particularly great significance today. As socialism grows and the socialist countries and the anti imperialist movements get stronger international imperialism consolidates itself more closely in the fight against socialism and revolutionary movements. A fight it is waging in the economic social political military ideological and cultural spheres. Imperialist policy must be

¹ V I Lenin Report at a Joint Session of the All Russia Central Executive Committee the Moscow Soviet Factory Committees and Trade Unions October 22 1918 *Collected Works*, Vol 28 p 120

regarded precisely as an interconnected global strategy affecting the most varied aspects of public affairs

The international working class can only block the efforts of imperialism by counterposing its own international joint actions to this strategy But that is only one side of the matter Another circumstance increasing the significance of the international solidarity of revolutionary forces is that it is impossible without it to develop broad offensive revolutionary activity aimed at a socialist transformation of society

Such are the principal factors governing the development of the tendency for the interaction of all today's revolutionary streams to broaden and deepen This trend fully confirms the truth and topicality of Lenin's theory of socialist revolution and the building of socialism and is evidence that the world revolutionary process is developing along the line of the perspectives foreseen by Lenin

3 The Science of Winning

The twentieth century has brought together revolution and Leninism All Leninism's theoretical propositions of principle have been convincingly confirmed by the course of history World development in this century appears as a fulfilling of Lenin's theoretical forecasts as realisation of the patterns of the revolutionary transformation of society in the epoch of the developing world process of the replacement of capitalism by socialism which he disclosed

The world continues to alter precipitously What will it be like tomorrow? From what theoretical heights can we glance into the future? What part of today's knowledge of society and of the laws of its development will retain their significance? What will help explain and resolve the new problems of humankind's socio-political existence? What will it run into on the path of history's progressive movement?

In recent decades capitalist and reformist thinking has put forward a host of ideas about the future of world development Some were painted in a more or less optimistic tone Recall for instance the theory of the post industrial society which forecast in essence an automatic coming about of social harmony through an all-embracing scientific and technical re-equipping of the production apparatus Other conceptions on the contrary presented the future in very sombre colours and called in fear and despair to halt progress and not exceed the limits of zero growth There is no need to go into what verdict the future will render on these

theoretical scientific looking constructs for mankind's present day social practice has already given its judgment. These ideas have revealed their flimsiness and lost the support of the very class whose interests they defended.

In the early 1980s the capitalist class itself began more and more clearly and unambiguously to recognise the failure of all its ideologists' endeavours to equip it with an understanding of the essence and specific character of the modern world and provide a theoretical basis for its strategy in the future. That is shown by the fact that the politically most influential groups of monopoly capital above all in the USA have decidedly rejected the recently still fashionable refined professorial ideas masquerading as science and openly proclaimed as the basis of their ideological stand the primitive slogan and long standing demand of the capitalist shark viz to secure it full freedom of action unrestricted by state regulation of any kind or any pretence of concern for human rights any recognition of the interests of nations independent national development any concern for the consequences that the unrestrained drive for profit may have on the environment or finally any standards of realism in foreign policy on whose observance the maintenance of peace and perhaps of life on earth itself fundamentally depend.

Such is the fate that has befallen capitalist ideology obviously doomed to failure in its theoretical quests to save capitalism. And what has been the fate of social reformist schemes? Was it not their advocates who citing the experience of post war decades demonstrated the irreversibility of the evolutionary transformation of capitalism into socialism they allege to have actually begun? Their arguments previously unconvincing have now collapsed like a house of cards. In the period of sharply aggravated crisis that set in in the mid 1970s embracing all aspects of capitalist society's affairs it is only by shutting one's eyes tight to reality that one can echo after Social Democrats and similar theorists that capitalist nationalisation is equivalent to socialist socialising of production that the capitalist state can be an instrument ensuring general prosperity that the institutions of social partnership smooth out class contradictions and make class struggle senseless.

The lack of prospects and the flimsiness and unsoundness of the aspirations of capitalist and reformist socio-political thinking are fundamentally rooted in the fact that it is closely linked with the interests of a class that has no future and has historically outlived its day and become obsolete. Only a really scientific theory can stand the test of time.

Marxism Leninism is such a theory. Like all others it too

expresses class interests but the interests of a class that is at the centre of the age and to which the future belongs. That is why its class character gives it the quality of a theory objectively reflecting the reality of social development in other words enables it to be a true science and not an arbitrary set of formulas adapted to expressing certain particular (group or national) political aspirations.

Leninist Communists attach great significance to disseminating and propagating their revolutionary science, the theories of Lenin. They fight for constructive assimilation of Lenin's theoretical legacy and constantly oppose any attempt to revise or distort it. They pay great attention to this because the victories of scientific socialism and greater scale of the working-class movement are accompanied with the danger of a lowering of its theoretical level as Lenin pointed out back at the beginning of the century.¹ This danger still exists today when the idea of replacing the capitalist system by socialism has become dominant in the mental climate of world political and social affairs when opportunism has been stimulated having got a broader social basis than before in the person of the numerous non-proletarian strata being drawn into the revolutionary movement and receiving considerable support from the capitalist class. This danger is also felt in the separate links of the international Communist movement in the form of attempts to surmount Leninism to counterpose amateur home-grown ideas of the transition to socialism strongly coloured by nationalism.

The inculcation of a socialist consciousness in the masses and the development of revolutionary theory are taking place in sharp struggle with the ideological opponents of scientific socialism. Nationalist prejudices and ambitions, striving to demonstrate one's originality and distinctive features, cost what it may, sometimes prevent the whole wealth of the ideas gathered and being accumulated by the world communist movement from being used. The authors of theories of that kind declare that the revolutionary transformation of society did correspond for a certain time to the tenets of Leninism but now (in their view) mankind faces issues to which Leninism cannot provide answers.

The world's development is constantly posing new problems and new issues. The concrete picture of the world transition to socialism is being enriched with ever new colours. The forms of the revolutionary transforming activity of the working people and of whole nations, the forms of the class struggle and the production activity and mental creativity of mankind are becoming more and more varied and correspond

¹ See V. I. Lenin *What Is to be Done?* *Collected Works* Vol. 5 p. 369

ingly new not repeating former models Leninism consistently helps show the way to understanding the inevitability of this growing renewal of the concrete forms and concrete content of social activity at each spiral of the development of the class struggle and at each new stage of the historical retreat of capitalism and the moulding of the communist formation. With all the shifts and swings that are altering the face of the world it is the theory of Leninism that gives and will provide the key to understanding its fundamental social problems

No one can adopt the pose of denying that the issue of war and peace is not the same today as it was in the years after the triumph of the October Revolution and even in some respects not the same as it was a decade or so ago. There is no doubt that it will acquire many new facets in the future yet all the same no one can replace Lenin's idea of the peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems when working out the scientific principles for coping with this issue

The complicated problems of the interaction of socially heterogeneous forces in the struggle for the socialist transformation of society will get an increasingly complex concrete content as the struggle develops. Where are we to find reliable scientifically verified approaches to tackling the issues of principle that will inevitably be posed as class alliances and broad anti-monopolist fronts are formed on the national arena? And with the working out, development and deepening of new active forms of the co-operation of international forces? Only in Leninism whose merit is both the theoretical posing of these issues themselves and the fundamental scientific answers to them

In a period of mounting internationalisation of all spheres of social activity and human life and of increasing international solidarity of the revolutionary forces the relation of the international and internal factors affecting the fight for socialism is becoming more and more important. In the future it will disclose new still unforeseeable aspects. In any case however the law of the uneven development of capitalism discovered by Lenin and its corollary which is oriented on unfolding of the working class's revolutionary energy within the national context of each separate country will retain continuing significance for its solution

Realisation of tasks of a general democratic character will remain on the agenda of the revolutionary working class and national liberation movement for the whole foreseeable future. Whatever the concrete specific problems are in that connection the general approach to tackling them will ensure success only when it corresponds to a strategy that follows

from Lenin's theory of hegemony of the proletariat in the democratic struggle

This list of cardinal issues of social development and the revolutionary struggle in whose solution Lenin's theory had has and will continue to have a very weighty word could be continued. But it is not just that which determines Leninism's lasting theoretical significance.

It is also determined by the fact that Leninism is an integral internally rigorous theory, the inexhaustible wealth of whose ideas reflects the complex interconnection of the processes and phenomena of the objective world. That is why Leninism is indispensable in the fight for a revolutionary transformation of exploiter society and the building of a new system in its constant dual role, viz. as a theory that brings out the essence of the radical issues facing mankind and a theoretical guide for the working class's socio-historical practice and the ideological and political activity of its militant vanguard, Communists. For them Leninism is the real science of winning.

Leninism, like any real scientific theory, is not a fixed schema. It is a living, constructive, developing theory. Its content is being constantly enriched by the collective constructive thinking of the Communist movement and by generalisation of revolutionary practice and of the experience of building socialism and communism. It can therefore never be narrower, more limited than the objective world reflected by it. Life demonstrates that this is not always understood as it should be even among modern Marxists, and even in political circles linked with the revolutionary working class movement. The idea of the notion of Leninism as a closed conception that cannot be employed to examine and develop the new ideas and new advances of scientific, theoretical thinking engenders attempts to put forward some sort of a broader theory of the ways and methods of fighting for the new society. In this theory it is also proposed to take something from Leninism, mainly certain tenets relating to political aspects of the revolutionary struggle.

But what do we get in fact? Just this, that the broader theory proves in fact to be narrower than Leninism and naturally loses out in scientific character, although it insists on being called scientific socialism. And it cannot, of course, be otherwise, for a theory of scientific socialism cannot exist and develop in isolation from a scientific philosophy and a scientific political economy. It is not without reason that theorizing about the class struggle and political forms of the transition to socialism that is not firmly based on the ideas of historical materialism opens the road quite often to trivial, subjectivist evaluations. And likewise, it is thus not by chance

that scientific looking theories of socialism that boast of having surmounted Leninism in fact put forward hasty recipes which did not stand the test by practice of an alleged socialist transformation of the economy on the basis of the market mechanisms created by capitalism

The practical experience of the first victorious socialist revolution and of the first state in the world to begin building the new society was deeply thought over by Lenin and gave him the chance to take considerably further Marx's theory of class struggle and of the patterns of the replacement of the last exploiter system by socialism. In opposition to what the advocates of de Leninisation untiringly assert however there is no national limitation of Russian narrowness in Lenin's theory of socialism and of the fight for it. There is no such pettiness and there simply could not be for Leninism's conclusions generalising the revolutionary practice of the proletariat and working masses of Russia were not the result of its direct reflection but of a careful analysis of it made on the general theoretical and methodological basis of Marxism as a whole and of the yet uninvestigated experience of the international working class movement. It would be stupid for example to see only a description of the concrete experience of the Communists of Russia in Lenin's theory of the socialist revolution. Anyone acquainted with it knows very well that it is a development of the conception of historical materialism permeated with the ideas of revolutionary dialectics and based on its method and following from the classic politico-economic investigation of imperialism as the highest stage in the development of capitalism made by Lenin himself.

Ideologists hostile to the working class try to disrupt the wholeness inherent in Marxism-Leninism and somehow break up the unity of its three components viz philosophy political economy and scientific socialism separate its theory and methodology from one another and counterpose its theoretical theses and the experience of their practical realisation to one another. The enemies of Marxism-Leninism have not won themselves laurels on this road and those who try to operate by essentially the same means if only in posing the task of creating a broader theory of socialism than Leninism and one more suitable to the conditions of the end of the twentieth century cannot expect laurels either.

In opposition to every kind of utopian doctrine of socialism the achievements of the theory and methodology of Leninism have never jelled in the pages of books. During Lenin's own lifetime the ideas he put forward had already rapidly emerged onto the political arena and in being taken up by minds had been converted into a material force and into the science of making the revolution. For revolutionaries Lenin's theory has

always represented and always will what Lenin himself saw in it namely primarily and predominantly a guide to action¹

Complaints are sometimes heard in revolutionary circles however that Leninism does not give clear answers to the concrete issues arising during the class political struggle. These complaints are unjustified to say the least although often explicable because they come as a rule from those who would like to get some kind of handbook of ready made recipes for all occasions in life from revolutionary theory or in other words who want to cover up their own passivity by references to the shortcomings of science.

The theory of revolution created by Lenin is not of course and cannot be such a handbook. If it is a matter of ready made recipes for all occasions however there is one such of course in Leninism namely Lenin's call to master and be guided by revolutionary skill and art as well as by theoretical knowledge of the laws of social development and the class struggle.

Leninism teaches that no knowledge (even the most perfect) can lead the working people to victory without ability to wage the revolutionary struggle in practice. While equipping revolutionaries with an understanding of these patterns and the world historical perspectives of the struggle Leninism at the same time requires them to exploit all the possibilities provided by given concrete circumstances creatively and with initiative and to take decisions boldly in any situation however complicated.

It is not by chance that there are so many places in Lenin's work devoted to a special examination of possible changes in the political behaviour of the masses and of classes and parties. In that way he taught the party to master not only the sphere of the necessary in the revolution but also that of the possible, probable and accidental without which the revolution and socialist transformations could not conceivably be carried out. Lenin introduced such a social quantity for example as determination to take a certain risk into the strategy and tactics of the proletariat's class struggle. Without it it was impossible in practice to make revolutions though quite possible to hold forth in fine form about revolutions. During the first Russian Revolution Lenin had already written:

No socialist party in the world could wrest the masses from the influence of the liberal or radical bourgeois parties which base themselves on the mentality of the

¹ V. I. Lenin *Letters from Afar* *Collected Works*, Vol. 23 p. 330

philistine without giving them a jolt without meeting with some resistance without taking the risk involved in the *first* experiment ¹

Today too readiness to take the risk involved in the first experiment that can open up new directions of the fight for victory a risk needless to say weighed and supported by the strength of party organisation and concrete mobilisation of the masses ensures success in leadership of the revolution and in deepening and developing it and confirms the great significance of a bold constructive search for the optimum answer to the problems arising during the class struggle

Leninism teaches that if the proletarian party wants to gain the masses confidence and to win it must be together with the masses since life itself has awakened them to rise in revolutionary struggle even if it seems hopeless to a party that it is mistaken and dangerous to hold back or restrain the open actions and initiative of the masses waiting for special circumstances of some sort or an absolutely sure chances As Lenin wrote about Marx (it can also be fully applied to himself—K Z)

(he) was also able to appreciate that there are moments in history when a desperate struggle of the *masses* even for a hopeless cause is *essential* for the further schooling of these masses and their training for the *next* struggle ²

Practice shows that when the working class and its party do not have enough experience of their own involvement in direct open battles with the capitalist class a dangerous malady of inactivity and passiveness attacks them and then neither the numerical size of the party and its past services to the working class movement nor well conducted purely propagandist educational work can save it

The refining or melting down of rigorously scientific generalisations of complex social affairs into the slogans of practical politics formulated with due allowance for the social psychology of the masses ability to pass from slogans inspiring the masses to struggle to thoroughly prepared (organisationally and technically) direct political actions to win power a capacity to react sharply and correctly to the accidents and deviations of various kinds that inevitably arise during a revolution readiness for full self involvement during the revolutionary struggle study of revolutionary traditions assimilation of all the wealth of the revolutionary

¹ V I Lenin When You Hear the Judgement of a Fool *Collected Works*, Vol 11 p 463

² V I Lenin Preface to the Russian Translation of Marx's Letters to Dr Kugelmann *Collected Works*, Vol 12 pp 111 12

movement's international experience and constructive creative application of it in practice—are all most important components of Lenin's art of leading the revolution. It was worked out the hard way and mastered in practice by Lenin's party during the class battles of the twentieth century that took place in Russia. It was tried and tested by the strictest of judges viz. the first victorious proletarian revolution in history that of October 1917 which tore the chain of world imperialism and showed all nations the main direction of their struggle and certain essential features of their own not distant future. It has been confirmed and developed further by all the subsequent revolutions of this century.

One of the greatest birthrights of Marxism is the unity of theory and practice. In Leninism it represents a unity of the science and art of making the revolution. After publication of the first volume of *Capital* Engels wrote: "Whoever wants to fight socialism now must cope with Marx."¹ And we can now say that whoever wants to fight Marxism-Leninism must cope not only with the theory but also the very great practical gains of the international working class must cope with living real socialism. Needless to say no one will ever succeed in doing that.

The source of the all-conquering strength and viability of Leninism is its great truth. Leninism has become the brains of the building of communism and of the revolutionary working class movement. The international Meeting of Communist and Workers Parties held in 1969 gave the following unanimous evaluation of Leninism:

Today we have every justification for saying about Lenin's teaching what he himself said about Marxism: it is omnipotent because it is true.²

And today everyone shares it who opposes imperialism and reaction from a revolutionary standpoint who consistently fights for emancipation of the working class and to make its ideals come true.

Conclusions

The possibilities of a further transition of nations to socialism depend to an enormous extent on the advances of the socialist community and of Communist Parties and all

¹ Friedrich Engels: Karl Marx. In: Karl Marx/Friedrich Engels: *Werke* Bd. 16 (Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1968) S. 365.

² *International Meeting of Communist and Workers Parties, Moscow 1969* p. 41.

anti imperialist democratic movements in the fight against the aggressive forces of imperialism and its allies for a lessening of the war danger and consolidation of peace

The positive turn taken in international affairs in the 70s had as its basis the swings caused by the extension and deepening of the world revolutionary process all contingents of which are interested in consolidating relations of peaceful coexistence and detente The intensified attempts of imperialism of the early 1980s to undermine these relations are being resolutely rebuffed and repulsed by the socialist community and other revolutionary and peace forces which regard the struggle for peace as a most important factor in mankind's further advance along the road of social progress

The outlook for the world revolutionary process is primarily governed by the socialist trend on whose growth real socialism has a decisive influence This trend is playing a more and more significant role in the development of the working class and national liberation movement and in deepening the international interaction of the revolutionary forces of today

Leninism was and is the most important factor in the fight for a socialist transformation of society All attempts to revise Lenin's theory and to replace it by opportunist doctrines are historically bankrupt and hopeless Leninism and humankind's socialist future are inseparable

CONCLUSION

Having set ourselves the aim of giving as clear and integral a picture as we could of the Marxist Leninist theory of the transition to socialism and its practical embodiment in life we have naturally paid special attention to the fundamental tenets and propositions of this theory and the cardinal issues of fundamental importance of the fight for the new social system. We have therefore kept in the foreground problems of methodology determined by the relation of the general and the particular in development of the revolution of the objective and the subjective of form and content and of theory and practice in short of the dialectic of the revolutionary process without allowance for which of course it is impossible either to properly understand the aims of social revolution and the building of the new society or to fight successfully for their realisation.

In accordance with our scheme we have tried to trace in the main at least and substantially the whole historical road to socialism from the source of its ideas drawing on the works of Marx, Engels and Lenin and victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia to the formation of the world socialist system the building of developed socialism in the USSR and the outlook for social renewal of the world that the advances of the revolutionary forces are opening up today.

We have seen that whatever particular forms the fight for socialism has taken in the twentieth century and whatever specific features have distinguished it in one country or another and in one historical period or another its development has always and everywhere been governed independently of time and place by the general patterns reflected in the Marxist Leninist theory of the socialist revolution and in the building of socialist society.

This truth has been concretised in our book by a series of comparisons of historical experience and today's problems of the fight for socialism which have formed another line of

our exposition. These comparisons have made it possible to demonstrate graphically that the deep changes that have taken place in recent decades in the development of the revolutionary movement have not only not annulled the laws of the transition to socialism tested by historical practice but on the contrary have fully confirmed them. And in our day Lenin's idea that the general course of the proletarian revolution is the same throughout the world¹ retains all its significance.

We have tried both in the special sections of our book and in relation to concrete problems of the transition to socialism of building socialism to stress the objective necessity of the guiding role of Communist Parties in the fight for the new social system. Communist and Workers Parties each by itself and all together are developing Marxist-Leninist theory, enriching it with the enormous experience of building real socialism of the revolutionary struggle of the working class and all working people in the citadels of imperialism of the national liberation movement and of the whole international Communist movement. A signal example was the 26th Congress of the CPSU which gave a deep analysis of the whole set of pressing problems of the world revolutionary process and made a new important contribution to the development of Marxist-Leninist theory.

We would make two further points. The breadth of the theme and the dynamic rapidly changing development of international events have not let us cover all aspects of the problems considered. We have tried to throw light on what we thought to be the main moments, especially those that have been the focus of political thought in recent years. Secondly, we have not avoided the contentious issues in the world Communist and working-class movement caused by the complexities of the tasks and the diversity of the conditions in which these tasks have to be tackled. We have tried to justify our position, conscious that not everything will be accepted and not everyone will agree with us. The main point, as we see it, is to demonstrate the importance of practice as the criterion of truth and to defend the revolutionary science, Marxism-Leninism, against the attacks of its enemies. At the same time we have been guided by Lenin's pointer that many disagreements

can and unfailingly will vanish; this will result from the logic of the joint struggle against the really formidable enemy, the bourgeoisie.²

¹ V. I. Lenin, First Congress of the Communist International, March 2-6, 1919, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 470.

² V. I. Lenin, To the Communist Comrades Who Belonged to the United Communist Party of Germany and Have Now Formed a New Party, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 89.

* * *

Before October 1917 Lenin said graphically that socialism was staring out of every factory window. In our day the new social system has become a reality for many nations. As Leonid Brezhnev said in the Central Committee's report to the 26th Congress of the CPSU:

There is no country or group of countries and no ideological or political school that has not felt the influence of socialism to one extent or another.¹

The road to socialism and communism, however difficult it may be, is the only possible road for mankind. All countries will inevitably follow it. And that is what, in the final count, we have tried to demonstrate in this book.

¹ See L. I. Brezhnev, *Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU to the XXVI Congress*, p. 105.

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Konstantin Zarodov (1920-1982) was editor-in-chief of the international journal *World Marxist Review (Problems of Peace and Socialism)* from 1968 to his death, and a leading Soviet publicist and historian of the Russian and international working-class movement. His published works, many translated into English and other languages, include *The Three Russian Revolutions and Our Time*, *Socialism, Peace and Revolution*, and the present volume.